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12 MAY 1978

BEHAVIORAL EFFECTS OF OFFICER EVALUATION IN THE US ARMY

by

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE W. TATE
ADJUTANT GENERALS CORPS



US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) Behavioral Effects of Officer Evaluation in the US Army		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED
7. AUTHOR(s) Lieutenant Colonel George W. Tate, AGC		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS US Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Same as Item 9		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		12. REPORT DATE 12 May 1978
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 99
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) UNCLASSIFIED
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The US Army's officer evaluation system has a material effect on the motivation and behavior of Army officers. The processes and behaviors generated by the evaluation system impact significantly on the Army's organizational climate. Current and past evaluation systems have been based on untested, and in some cases false, assumptions. These fallacious assumptions cause certain dysfunctional behaviors among members of the officer corps. Rating officials are affected, as are officers being rated. The author presents an extensive		

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Item 20. ABSTRACT (Continued)

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DOC	B. ff Section <input type="checkbox"/>
DISPOSITION/AVAILABILITY CODES	
SPECIAL	
11	

UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE(When Data Entered)

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

⑥ BEHAVIORAL EFFECTS OF OFFICER EVALUATION IN
THE US ARMY.

⑨ INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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Adjutant General's Corps

⑫ 114 p.

US Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

⑪ 12 May 1978

Approved for public release;
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AUTHOR(S): GEORGE W. TATE, LTC, AGC

TITLE: Behavioral Effects of Officer Evaluation in the US Army

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 12 May 1978

PAGES: 99

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

The US Army's officer evaluation system has a material effect on the motivation and behavior of Army officers. The processes and behaviors generated by the evaluation system impact significantly on the Army's organizational climate. Current and past evaluation systems have been based on untested, and in some cases false, assumptions. These fallacious assumptions cause certain dysfunctional behaviors among members of the officer corps. Rating officials are affected, as are officers being rated. The author presents an extensive original model which depicts typical and predictable behavioral responses of officers in eight different evaluative circumstances. Extrapolating from effects on individual behavior to collective effects on the entire officer corps, the sociological influence of the evaluation system is explored. It is argued that officer motivation, performance and professionalism can be enhanced through reassessment of assumptions, and through application of tested behavioral science theories of motivation to the officer evaluation process. The notion of motivation as a resource is suggested and broadly tied to national security issues.

FOREWORD

Probably no single subject evokes more controversy and emotion among US Army officers than that of officer evaluation. Perhaps this is a natural reaction of the concerned military professional, as each officer at least intuitively recognizes that the Army's executive appraisal--or officer evaluation--system is the mechanism through which emerge the leaders who will mold and lead tomorrow's Army. At a more personal level of concern, each officer knows too that the officer evaluation system is his path to individual career success--or failure. Both idealistic professional concerns and pragmatic personal career concerns thus contribute to the perceived importance of the officer evaluation system. But is there more? Are there other more subtle forces which cause the debate to be so vehement and "noise level" to be so high vis-a-vis the officer evaluation system?

This paper suggests that there is indeed more. It suggests that the officer evaluation system is not merely a major administrative system, but that it is the principal force which governs the behavior of the officer corps. It suggests that the behavioral implications and consequences of the officer evaluation system are even more important than the more obvious, better-understood administrative role of the system.

As we begin, let us look at the more common perception of the officer evaluation system. Although few would dispute that personnel appraisal is one of the most critical elements of any personnel system, still fewer have a full appreciation for the dominant role of the Army's officer evaluation system. The keystone of a vast highly centralized

officer management system, the administrative impact of the Officer Evaluation System (OES) is well capsulized in this quote from a 1974 Army War College study:

The OER is a multiplex system, linked to and driving, overtly or covertly, many officer personnel management subsystems. It is far more than the Army's system of executive appraisal. The Officer Evaluation System (OES) is a major factor, not only in its obvious promotion role, but also in assignment, elimination, school selection, performance counseling, career counseling, officer education, officer development, officer distribution, designation of lines of authority, and officer personnel research.¹

The administrative importance of the OES is thus undisputed, but that, in itself, fails to account for the passions which it arouses. The reasons for every officer's emotional involvement with the OES are not well understood by most, and even then, are only vaguely articulated. Few realize, and still fewer admit, the extent to which the evaluation process influences their life. But in a very direct and material way, the manner by which Army officers are evaluated influences their values, their perceptions, their leadership style, and their overall pattern of behavior. Collectively this influence is a potent social force which pervades the very ethos of the officer corps and molds the Army far more than the personalities and policies of its leaders.

It is the intent of this paper, then, to focus on these behavioral effects of officer evaluation. The paper will analyze officer evaluation as a process, not as a system. It will not focus on any specific Officer Evaluation Report (OER) form or policy, nor will it

¹US Army War College, Executive Appraisal: Confidence in the Officer Evaluation System (Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1974), p. 8.

espouse any panaceas or recommendations for improvement. Its observations are intended as descriptive, rather than normative.

What then is the utility of an analysis of the behavioral effects of officer evaluation? First, to the best of my knowledge, this is an intellectual reconnaissance into uncharted territory. While much has been written on the Army's OER systems, I know of no other work which has sought to explore and document the behavioral dynamics generated through the very process of being evaluated. Too, while there is much literature on performance appraisals in general, few works approach the subject from the standpoint of the behavioral results of appraisal systems. Thus, it is anticipated that there is at least some scholastic merit in drawing together into a cohesive presentation facts and theories from heretofore diffuse and divergent bodies of knowledge. Perhaps this aggregation of information will provide a fresh perspective from which to view a subject of vast importance to the US Army.

A second utility of this paper, more practical than scholarly, is that it may shed new light on the design of Army officer evaluation systems. Although not a systems-oriented paper, this inquiry into the evaluation process is couched, for frame of reference, in the current Army officer evaluation system. Any system is only as good as the assumptions on which it is based, and this study shows that many of the assumptions on which the Army's Officer Evaluation System (OES) is based are invalid. From there, it is only a short mental skip and jump to develop the point that if key, underlying assumptions are invalid, then the system itself is at least partially invalid.

If the officer evaluation system affects the behavior of Army officers, and if that system is partially invalid, it is possible, if

not likely, that some of the behaviors it produces are organizationally dysfunctional and undesirable. Hence one of the practical applications of this study; if future evaluation system designs are based on correct assumptions, rather than on the erroneous assumptions identified herein, these dysfunctional officer behaviors can be minimized or eliminated, and perhaps supplanted by behaviors more appropriate to a professional officer corps in the execution of national security missions.

Finally, through understanding of the complex interpersonal dynamics of the officer evaluation process, supervisors at all levels could better predict the behavioral consequences of their actions. Better prediction of subordinate's behavior, in turn, would enhance the effectiveness of leaders Army-wide. In the process, the motivation and effectiveness of subordinates could be improved. The resulting synergism of motivated subordinates and leader effectiveness may well hold the key to the Army's contemporary challenge to do more with less. Perhaps it would not overstate the case to suggest that within the behavioral patterns of the officer corps, influenced by the evaluation system, are sown the seeds of winning tomorrow's war.

The simple literature search methodology of this study is not rigorous. It draws upon an interdisciplinary collection of works in the behavioral and social sciences to support its findings. As with many works in those fields, this paper suffers from imprecise definitions and inevitable subjective value judgments and biases on the part of author and reader alike.

Within the scope of this paper it was impossible to support findings with original statistical data. To compensate for this

methodological shortcoming, every effort has been made to support key points with reference to established authoritative works which do draw on an empirical base. It is hoped that this paper might serve as the basis for future more rigorous analysis which would test its major points with original data and solidify its theoretical foundations. For now, while this study is offered in a speculative, tentative manner, it is hoped that it will extend, or at least pull together, our knowledge and understanding of how the process by which the Army evaluates its officers affects individual and corporate officer corps behavior.

I am deeply indebted to the Army for permitting me a tour of duty as Chief, Officer Evaluation Branch, at the Army's Military Personnel Center, where I gained many of the insights contained herein, as well as the opportunity to reflect on those thoughts while attending the Army War College and the Pennsylvania State University. I appreciate particularly the assistance of Drs. Daniel M. Poore and Robert S. Nichols (COL, USA) in critiqueing this paper during its preparation.

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Lieutenant Colonel, US Army

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CHAPTER I

THE OFFICER EVALUATION PROCESS--FICTIONS AND REALITIES

GENERAL

Most large organizations have formal executive appraisal systems. The US Army, with an officer corps of nearly 100,000 persons dispersed around the globe, is no exception. As suggested in the foreword, the Army's officer evaluation system serves a critical institutional need in providing the mechanism through which future leaders emerge. It will be the purpose of this study to show that the officer evaluation system determines not only who will rise to positions of power in the Army, but also that the processes set in motion by the officer evaluation system in large measure determine what sort of leaders they will be when they get there. Through the process of long-term socialization enforced principally through the officer evaluation system, the characteristics and traits of Army leaders are subtly but surely influenced, so that when one reaches senior positions, his or her repertoire of behaviors is thoroughly conditioned.

Although this study is process oriented rather than systems oriented, it is important to note that the behavioral dynamics and interpersonal processes which emerge are largely determined by the assumptions, characteristics, and policies of the officer evaluation system. If one accepts that any system is only as good as the assumptions which underlie it, and if one places any credence in the argument that the officer evaluation system influences officer behavior, then the importance of

the base assumptions of the Army's officer evaluation system becomes self-evident. This chapter will examine those assumptions.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF ASSUMPTIONS TO SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS
AND CONFIDENCE LEVELS

The Army's officer evaluation system has never been popular. Studies suggest that officer corps confidence in the evaluation system has always been low and that this creates problems for both the individual and the institution.¹

Apart from but related to the issue of confidence is the issue of effectiveness. Apparently the Army is not convinced of the effectiveness of current and past evaluation systems, as it is currently on its seventh generation Officer Evaluation Report (formerly "Officer Efficiency Report"), OER, since July 1947.² In November 1974, less than two years after introduction of the DA Form 67-7 OER, it fell victim to "inflation" of its scoring system, lost the confidence of the Army's senior leaders, and it was publicly announced that a replacement system was on the way.³ Although development and approval of the follow-on system has been delayed, it is clear that the Army leadership regards its current officer evaluation system as relatively ineffective and temporary.

If the officer corps doesn't like the system and the Army, as an institution, is dissatisfied with it, what is the problem? A 1970 Army War College study suggested that "the basic assumptions of the (officer) evaluative process . . . have questionable validity."⁴ Although they have never been explicitly articulated, subsequent

discussion will deal with the underlying assumptions of the Army's officer evaluation system, the validity of those assumptions, and their impact on evaluation accuracy and on officer behavior.

THE FIRST PREMISE . . . OBJECTIVITY (?)

The basic premise or assumption of Army officer evaluation is that a superior (rater; evaluator) can accurately evaluate a subordinate (ratee) against a series of criteria on an OER form in a rational, logical, and objective manner. (The word "measures" has even been used.) Rating officials are asked to complete officer evaluation reports in much the same fashion as they are asked to complete equipment status reports, budget reports, or unit strength reports. Army emphasis over the years has been on the administrative aspects of the evaluation process and on report preparation. Army regulations governing evaluation reports have traditionally dealt at length with how to complete and process OER forms. But the process of reporting and the process of evaluating are not the same, and no corresponding emphasis has been placed on how to evaluate the performance of an individual. The effect has been to disregard the complex, judgmental issues of the evaluative process, and to attach a perfunctory, administrative connotation to what is actually an extremely complex exercise in interpersonal dynamics.

The premises of objectivity and rationality of the evaluative process are contrary, however, to our understanding of relationships between people, including relationships between raters and ratees. Such relationships are not rational, logical, and objective in nature. They are, instead, highly subjective and based on sentiments, feelings,

and emotions. Officer evaluation is not a rational, administrative process.

INDUCTION vs. DEDUCTION: HOW ARE EVALUATIVE JUDGMENTS FORMED?

How do people judge other people? What thought processes occur? How do evaluation reports correlate with this judgmental process?

In this arena, the Army has been the victim of stereotype and orthodoxy. Conventional wisdom has served as a barrier to genuine understanding and has led the Army to design system after system on false assumptions.

Conventional theory holds that, after the rating official has gone individually, step by step, through a series of independent assessments of the ratee against clearly distinguished discrete criteria (such as the 67-7 OER's "Professional Attributes" (Figure 1, p. 23) or the 67-6's "Personal Qualities") (Figure 2, p. 24), he is able to sum up these various "measures" and arrive by induction at a composite overall evaluation. For example, briefings accompanying the introduction of the 67-7 OER emphasized that "the form was designed specifically to lead the rating official through a logical thought process."

This quote, while seemingly like "apple pie and motherhood," is symptomatic of the ritualistic homage we have paid to conventional evaluation "wisdom," based largely on untested (or disproved) assumptions. Such conventional unchallenged assumptions have been tenaciously clung to and constitute barriers to understanding. Thus, while

conventional theory may appear rational and logical, evidence from the behavioral sciences suggests that evaluative judgment is not inductive, but rather, is a deductive process.

Raters form opinions about subordinates on an informal, day-to-day basis. We are continually evaluating the behavior of those around us. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, perhaps even unconsciously, an overall or "global" impression is formed.⁵ "Such judgments," according to a leading authoritative text⁶ "may be contaminated to unknown degrees by factors such as appearance, education, experience, acquaintance, liking, or disliking, which may or may not be correlated with, or even relevant to, actual criterion performance."

Unlike the premises of clarity, specificity, objectivity and precision upon which Army officer evaluation policies are based, these vague, nonspecific, generalized (or global) impressions of a fellow man render it difficult (if not impossible) to isolate and recall at OER time the specific behaviors which led to the global impression. Because rating periods may be, in the current Army system, as long as a year in duration, the specific behavioral examples which contribute to a global impression become relatively undifferentiated in the perceptual field of the rater. It is probable that only the most recent (still differentiated) or most significant ("critical") incidents are perceived with sufficient clarity to permit a somewhat valid judgment of the total performance of the officer being rated.⁷

To complete an evaluation report the rater must break out and sort his overall undifferentiated impression of the ratee according to the specific, differentiated criteria of the OER form. Thus while the

OER form is designed to be inductive, leading the rater through a subset of differentiated, discrete criteria to an overall composite evaluation, in actuality the rater's mental process is deductive, requiring him to shred-out his composite global perception into multiple responses to the OER's multiple evaluation criteria.

In order to do this, the rater must examine his perceptions of the rated officer. Has he actually had the opportunity to see, touch, smell, feel, experience, measure--to know--the degree to which the subordinate possesses the 67-6's "Personal Qualities" or the 67-7's "Professional Attributes"? (See Figures 1 and 2.) What about "moral and character strength"? Does the ratee possess it absolutely? Or situationally? To what degree? What about "non-duty conduct"? How far does one's "evaluator's license" extend into the private domain of subordinate's lives? Is this criteria germane? All of this makes the evaluator very uncomfortable, not to mention uncertain about his ability to diagnose another human's character and personality. And rightly so. Kindall and Gatza make the point that:

It is one thing for an executive to react to another's personality when 'sizing him up.' We do that every day. But it is quite another thing for a manager to delve into the personality of a subordinate in an official appraisal that goes into the records and affects his career. The latter amounts to quackery--to a pretension to training or knowledge which is not in fact possessed.⁸

PROBLEMS OF SEMANTICS

Given the task of responding to the OER's separate, specific evaluation criteria, the evaluator is faced with a multitude of problems beyond mere forgetfulness and undifferentiated perceptions.

First, what is it that the report actually seeks to elicit? What is "moral courage," "integrity," etc.? Semantic and definitional problems abound. There is subjectivity and the opportunity for imprecision at every turn. In the minds of evaluation system designers, a particular word or phrase chosen as an evaluation criteria may have one meaning, while to the rater actually using the OER form it may have quite a different meaning. And once the OER is completed, the word or phrase in question may have yet another meaning to the individuals using the report for any one of myriad personnel management purposes. Semantic issues are thus involved in the basic judgmental processes of evaluation as well as in the manner by which those judgments are reported upward in the organization. Though related, it is clear that judgmental processes and the processes of reporting that judgment through the formal evaluation system are sufficiently different to warrant development and definition of those differences.

EVALUATION vs. REPORTING

One of the befuddling aspects of looking at the process of evaluation is that quite different, though closely related and interactive, behavioral processes are involved. For the purpose of discussion, let us concede for the moment the existence of an evaluator's ability to "diagnose" a subordinate. In this hypothetical world of unclouded judgment, there is another set of factors which operates to frustrate the best of evaluation system designs; factors which retard the conversion of judgment in the mind of the rater into written evaluation reports. Part of the problem is semantic, as discussed above.

But, once again, for the sake of discussion, let us disregard this set of problems and assess the rater's ability and propensity to report his "findings."

Granting the ability to articulate one's evaluation (which is at best an ability existing in uneven measure across the officer corps), a major stumbling block is encountered with the rater's propensity to record and report his evaluation. Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, and Wieck report that "observers differ in what they see and what they report."⁹ They note that a reluctant rater may employ any one of the following tactics, all of which cause aberrations in the reporting of an evaluation.

Central Tendency

He may complete all of the forms in about the same way for all the people he describes, thereby failing to discriminate either between different persons or within the behavioral repertoire of a single person.

Leniency Tendency

This is merely a special type of central tendency error in which the observer tends to give only favorable or highly effective descriptions of everyone. Manifest in the Army, we have labeled this "inflation."

Halo

The observer, in filling out the form, makes an overall evaluative judgment (e.g., "good" or "bad") about each officer and then proceeds to describe him using all seemingly "good" or "bad" behavioral

statements, regardless of the actual behavioral content of the statements making up the form.

Temporal Extension

Expanding the foregoing list, from Campbell et al, Lawless¹⁰ notes that the phenomena of temporal extension influences evaluating officials as they go about reducing their perceptions to written evaluation reports. Simply stated, temporal extension indicates that a momentarily observed characteristic of a person is regarded as permanent. Lawless¹¹ goes on to connect the "temporal extension" phenomenon with the "first impression" phenomenon which also causes error in assessment of others; e.g., we tend to carry our first (limited) impression of people forward into subsequent interactions with them.

Static Judgment and Implicit Personality Theory

Lawless¹² further reports that other socio-psychological factors influence the evaluative process. He notes that there is a tendency to see persons as constant and unchanging entities, a process of cognitive economics which eliminates the necessity of perceiving behaviors which deviate from the subject's assumed character. He reports also that persons tend to order their cognitive processes about other people according to an "implicit personality theory." This is the idea that the perceiver, without realizing it, has a theory about what other people are like and that this theory influences all his judgments of people.

Inconsistent Responses to Convey a
False Impression

Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, and Wieck¹³ add further to our knowledge of contaminants in the evaluation process by noting that there is a common tendency to make variable and inconsistent responses on evaluation reports, without regard to the actual behavior of the subject, to convey the (false) impression that care has been taken in differentially describing a person's behavior.

Past Performance or Future Career?

Not listed among the above discussed sources of evaluation error, there is a fairly sound hypothesis that Army raters, in rendering OERs, are more influenced by what they want to happen to the subordinate (vis-a-vis his career) than by his performance, which is the ostensible basis for the report. In June 1974 the Army War College, in a survey of 575 officers, found hard evidence to support this hypothesis.¹⁴ Respondents were asked to identify on a scale of 1-9 (1=minimal influence, 9=great influence) the factors which influenced them when they rated subordinates. The second strongest of the thirty-seven rating influences was "My desire to influence future personnel actions on the ratee." (on the 1-9 scale, the sample mean was 7.22 with a standard deviation of 2.3.)

How do raters know what will influence a subordinate's career in the desired manner? The answer is that most don't. Each has his own ideas on the subject, based on his familiarity (or lack thereof) with the systems for officer promotion, assignment, elimination, and the like. To the extent that raters possess valid knowledge of these

systems and apply it to their evaluations, they are said to have gained "sophistication" in the officer evaluation game. Their ability to say the "right" things on OERs often finds expression in the belief that "if your rater can write well, you have an advantage over the guy whose rater can't." The issue, however, isn't writing ability, but rather, the "inside knowledge" of key buzz-words, phrases, scores, etc., which assure favorable consideration by selection boards.¹⁵

If a rater's simple global perceptions of a subordinate are no further differentiated than their value-laden bipolar "good" or "bad" judgment, they may follow the popular "I'll either max you or bust you" philosophy. This may be a "cop-out" for failing to observe a subordinate's performance sufficiently to draw greater distinctions, or may reflect genuine inability to discern more gradations of the ratee's performance.

In still other cases, rating officials may lack confidence in the evaluation system to the extent that they are willing to send only two types of signals to Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) regarding their subordinates: "Good guy . . . keep/promote him" or "bad guy . . . throw him out." Such attitudes, while unfortunately prevalent, shift the burden of making qualitative judgments about an officer's performance from the rating chain, where the ratee's performance has actually been observed, to HQDA, where boards and career managers must make difficult differential choices from large groups of essentially similar files. Just how serious is the problem of confidence in the officer evaluation system? Serious enough so that a special group study effort was devoted to this issue by fifteen officers at the US Army War College in 1974.¹⁶

Some rating officials display a form of rating behavior designed to send weak signals of a ratee's deficient performance to DA without the risk of a confrontation with that ratee. In some circles this form of rating is articulated as "I want to just nick him. I don't want to kill him." Rather than accurately reporting the ratee's performance, such raters may scan the OER for a block where they can indicate a slight deficiency which is still socially and professionally acceptable. The "tact" entry on the DA 67-6 OER often served this purpose.¹⁷ If, however, the rater wants to severely impede the ratee's career without having to confront him with explicit derogatory comments, there are a variety of signals he can send to DA without being obvious. Here the phenomena of "damning with faint praise"¹⁸ comes into play, along with such techniques as not recommending a combat arms officer for command.

SOCKS, PERCEPTIONS, AND CONTAMINANTS

Further contaminants to accurate evaluation are found in a variety of environmental factors. For example, the controversial effects of General Abrams' famous "pull up your socks" message were reported in a 1974 US Army War College Study.¹⁹ (The "pull up your socks" message was an attempt by General Abrams to dampen OER inflation. The text of the message is reproduced at Figure 3, page 25.) The War College study alluded to statistical data outputs of the OER Data System²⁰ which showed that varying degrees of compliance with the Chief of Staff's directive caused aberrations in OER scoring trends within and among commands. Such uneven application of command pressures constitutes a variable "contaminant" in the evaluative environment,

and may inhibit both the validity and the reliability of ratings.

Other than the differing levels of command pressure to "deflate" scores, there are numerous other contaminants in the Army's environment which tend to influence ratings. These include such diverse factors as:

- the rater's perception of the relative degree of risk and difficulty of the ratee's job.

- the adequacy of resources the ratee had available.

- rater-ratee interpersonal relationships.

- the rater's relationship with his own rater (since evaluations are frequently colored by how they will appear to others.)²¹

Inasmuch as the act of evaluating is basically a subjective judgmental one, one pervasive source of "contamination" involves the multiple sources of error in human perception and cognition. A lifetime could be spent without adequately chronicling all the problems of human perceptual and cognitive processes, but suffice for purposes of making the point in this paper, that raters may be blind to their own perceptual/cognitive errors. How often, for example, do raters stop to consider that what they perceive (with regard to the ratee) is not what exists, but what they believe exists? And that what is perceived is conditioned by what we have learned from our past opportunities and experiences.²²

THE RATING GAME

Everyone who has rated a subordinate officer on an Army OER has played the rating game to a greater or lesser degree. Most have either not been aware or have not raised to consciousness the difficulties and frustrations experienced in the process. For contrary to the simplistic

view upon which the Army's OER system is apparently based, evaluation is little understood, is staggering in complexity, and cannot be easily or uniformly mastered. The capacity to judge other people cannot be imparted, as can tactics or logistics, in a service school. It is a skill requiring effort and practice, and most importantly, requiring the absence of certain personality blocks. According to Dr. Harold J. Leavitt, parental and early environmental influences probably have more to do with this skill than anything else.²³ A person's capacity to judge probably correlates positively with the extent to which he can view the outside world undistortedly. This in turn depends largely on one's self-concept and sense of adequacy.²⁴ In all cases, one person's views about another person are likely to be potent projections of his own attitudes and feelings.²⁵ It has even been suggested that OERs reveal more about the rater than they do about the ratee.²⁶

RELEVANCE OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

A further myth about officer evaluation is that the OER elicits the information that Department of the Army deems as relevant. One might appropriately ask "Relevant for what?" Peter Drucker asserts that "We do not know what we look for in management potential, and have no way of testing it except in performance."²⁷ If this is true in the business world, certainly it must also hold true for the infinitely broad range of management and leadership tasks which Army officers perform.

Compounding the "relevance" issue for the Army is the fact that our single OER must be used for multiple and divergent purposes by

different groups and individuals, each of whom place different and often competing demands on it. "Relevant" data for promotion boards is not necessarily "relevant" to assignment officers attempting to select, say, an officer to be the next attache to Great Britain--or the next division chaplain for the 82d Airborne Division. In turn, the comparative evaluation data needed by HQDA is all but useless to the ratee's chain of command who are exhorted to use it in conjunction with performance counseling.²⁸ In the absence of truly "relevant" evaluation data, we must acknowledge that we are dealing with the general feelings of some people about some other people, and that the dangers of distortion are many.²⁹

PROBLEMS IN ATTACHING NUMERICAL VALUES

TO EVALUATIVE JUDGMENTS

Several iterations of OERs have employed overall numeric scores. For example on the 67-5 report, the rater and indorser had 120 points each for a total of 240, while on the 67-7, rater and indorser have 100 points each to award as a "total" report score. The underlying assumption is apparently that raters and indorsers can each discern 100-120 discrete gradations of officer "quality." This assumption appears to be fallacious in light of our knowledge of the evaluative, judgmental capabilities of the human mind. Rensis Likert has suggested³⁰ that no more than five gradations of judgment can be perceived, yet the fiction persists that Army raters can define 100-120.

COGNITIVE PROCESSES IN OFFICER EVALUATION

Although psychologists have shed much light on the subject, we still do not know enough about the mental processes associated with

evaluation. We do know that it is a difficult, almost agonizing process as we have seen, for the conscientious rater. Yet even the most conscientious rater, seeking to be as objective as possible, is subject to various contaminants and influences. Every evaluative circumstance is different, thus there is no cookbook formula of things the competent rater does or considers in evaluating subordinates. No discussion of the evaluative process would be complete, though, without making some attempt to define the things a rater thinks about. This list extracted from a 1974 Army War College Study³¹ is about as comprehensive as one needs to be. A cursory review of it reveals sufficient influences on the evaluative process to reinforce the point that evaluation is complex business.

"What do raters think about?" (External influences)

- What have I learned about how to rate from official branch policy; e.g., newsletters?
- What unofficial contact has there been between branch and local command regarding what ratings should be?
- Will branch look at my ratings? Result?
- What have I learned from the "big men" that suggests how I should rate?
- What have I heard from other officers who have recently visited branch?
- What information about trends, scores, and rater control have I learned from former branch officers who are "in the know"?

Self:

- Have I put enough effort and thought into how I'm going to rate?
- How emotionally attached am I to this man?
- What will this rating do to my reputation as a rater?

- How am I going to rationalize inflated ratings?
- To what degree will I accept official, local and indorser guidance? What will be the effect of "bucking the system"?
- How well do I know the true details of the rating game?
- What will others think of my integrity as a result of my rating?
- How can I minimize unpleasant confrontation with the ratee?

Job:

- What is the status of the ratee's job?
- How have other guys done in this job?
- What do I expect of men in this job? Has the ratee met these expectations?

Ratee and Family:

- How has the ratee performed in general and specifically?
- How do his subordinates feel about him?
- How does the ratee feel about me?
- What is the ratee's source of commission?
- What is his reputation? Locally? Within his branch? Army-wide? With my rater?
- What does he want with respect to an Army career?
- How will he react to what he perceives as an adverse rating? How will it affect his career desires?
- Has he tried to make any suggestions as to how I should rate him?
- Am I obligated to him in any way?
- How does he expect me to rate him?
- Will he compare his rating with his peers?
- Will he appeal my rating?
- What is the man's moral character like?

- How will my rating affect his family?
- Is he an Army brat? Does he have any important Army relatives or previous bosses?
- Will his race have any impact on me, my rater, or local commander?
- How do he and his wife do on the social scene? Is that important to me?
- What is his previous Army background, education, and social status?

Institution (DA):

- What are the specific requirements in published policy and on the form that tell me how to rate?
- What information has come down the chain of command on how I should rate?
- What have I learned in the school system on how to rate?
- What are the contradictions between what DA says and what I get locally and from my rater?
- Will anyone check my ratings "up there"? Will there be any impact on me or my career?
- What information have I gotten from unofficial publications (Army Times, etc.) on how to rate?
- What lessons on how to rate did I learn the very first time I made out an OER? What were the official versus unofficial contradictions? Which won out? Why?
- How much faith can I put in DA personnel policies in general, and OER policy in particular?

Peers:

- How are my local peers rating their ratees?
- Will my ratings be compared with theirs? By whom?

Local Command:

- What guidance, specific or general, stated or implied, has the local commander put out?

- What contacts has the local command had with the branches and MILPERCEN? Has he received any unofficial guidance?

- What controls or checks are made by the local command?

- What do local statistics look like?

- How will my ratings compare with others in the command? What will happen if they compare unfavorably?

Indorser:

- What has he said or written specifically about how to rate in general or specifically about this ratee?

- What has he said in casual conversation that suggests how he wants me to rate?

- How does he rate me?

- What can I infer about how he expects me to rate?

- How concerned is he with the impact of my rating on his or the unit's image and reputation?

- How much does he know about and what does he think about this specific ratee?

- Has he received official or unofficial guidance from his boss? What is it?

- Will my rating lead him to question my leadership ability?

What do raters think about? (Internal Objectives)

Branch:

- I intend to advise them of the ratee's accomplishments.

- I hope to influence their future personnel action decisions on this ratee.

- I want to influence them to assign quality personnel to this organization.

- I intend to inform them of the rating norms in the field.

Self:

- I want to conform to my own norms and values.

- I want to verify my perception of my part in the success or failure of the ratee.

- I hope to determine if and how I might do a better job of developing my other subordinates.

- I need to satisfy my own ego.

- I want to protect myself against harmful reactions to this report from higher, lateral and lower sources.

Job:

- I want to modify external perceptions of the status accorded to the ratee's job.

Ratee and Family:

- I want to reward/punish him for his manner of performance.

- I want to motivate him to continue/change his manner of performance.

- I intend to point out his strengths/weaknesses.

- I intend to provide guidance for his professional development efforts.

- I want to impress him with my sincerity and expertise.

- I want to create an obligation for continued good service and loyalty to me.

- I intend to insure that I fulfill his rating expectations.

- I want to protect him from the vagaries of the system.

- I want to create high morale and esprit.

- I want to motivate the ratee's wife, and all other ratees' wives in the organization, to contribute to the community activities of the group.

- I want to reward the ratee's wife for her past contributions through recognition in the rating.

Institution (DA):

- I want to demonstrate that my rating satisfies published policy and guidance.

- I want this rating to contribute to improving the overall quality of the officer corps.

- I want to influence DA to assign high quality officers to my organization.

Peers:

- I want to impress my peers with my rating reputation; e.g., tough but fair.
- I want to influence my peers directly or indirectly to modify their rating behavior.

Local Command:

- I want to show the command that my rating conforms to its expressed or implied norms.
- I want to avoid criticism for my rating.
- I want to influence the command to assign high quality officers to my organization.

Indorser:

- I want to show him that my ratings conform to his expressed or implied norms.
- I want to gain his favor.
- I want to impress him with my rating expertise.
- I intend to inform him of the ratee's accomplishments.
- I hope to influence the way he rates me and others.

THE INFLUENCE OF SYSTEM ASSUMPTIONS ON EVALUATIONACCURACY AND ON OFFICER BEHAVIOR

The Army must continually make difficult choices from among a large pool of officers, as to who will rise to positions of greatest responsibility. Senior Army officers--those who are selected and make it to the top--bear a significant responsibility for US national security.

What is the likelihood that Army selection decisions are right? What is the likelihood that the evaluation process has been truly accurate in reflecting the genuine abilities of officers? For a

simplistic, but revealing (though rough and imprecise), gauge of the precision of the evaluative process, one need only consider the problem in statistical terms. If there are "X" independent sources of evaluation error and if, for the sake of example, the likelihood that any one of these sources of error is operating 50:50, then the joint probability of an accurate evaluation is $.5^X$. This is purely a hypothetical example and could never be statistically modeled with the precision we normally associate with quantitative techniques, but the notion that accuracy decreases exponentially with the number of sources of error can yield an intuitive insight into the problem. Given the many sources of error detailed in this chapter, the likelihood of accurate evaluations is small indeed!

This discussion has not intended to infer that mathematical precision in matters of human judgment is possible. It has rather suggested that the likelihood of some error in most evaluations is quite high. To the extent, however, that the underlying assumptions of any evaluation system coincide with what we know of human behavior, perception, and judgment, the sources of evaluation error can be reduced. This chapter has detailed some of the false assumptions and fictions the US Army has clung to as the basis for its officer evaluation systems. These false assumptions have not only produced imprecise evaluations, but also have contributed to dysfunctional behaviors among members of the Army officer corps. Subsequent chapters will deal with the influence of officer evaluation on individual and collective officer corps behavior.

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IMPORTANT: THE PREPARATION OF AN EFFICIENCY REPORT IS A SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY. EACH INDIVIDUAL WILL TAKE THE PREPARATION OF THE REPORT FOR HIS SUBORDINATES THAT HE SHOULD EXPECT HIS RATING OFFICER TO TAKE IN THE PREPARATION WILL BE TRUE AND IMPARTIAL. READ CAREFULLY REFERENCED PARAGRAPH IN AR 623-105 BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO FILL OUT

PART I - PERSONAL DATA (Read paragraph 1-2b, AR 623-105)

NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL			A. SERVICE NUMBER		C. SSAN		F. GRADE		G. DATE OF RANK		BASIC		DETAIL	
1. UNIT, ORGANIZATION, STATION, AND MAJOR COMMAND														

PART II - REPORTING PERIOD AND DUTY DATA (Read paragraph 3-2b, AR 623-105)

a. PERIOD COVERED						b. REASON FOR SUBMITTING REPORT (Check)		c. REPORT BASED ON (Check)		RATER		INDORSER	
FROM			TO			ANNUAL		DAILY CONTACT					
DAY	MONTH	YEAR	DAY	MONTH	YEAR	CHANGE OF RATER		FREQUENT OBSERVATION					
DUTY DAYS						PCS RATED OFFICER		INFREQUENT OBSERVATION					
						CHANGE OF DUTY FOR RATED OFFICER		RECORDS AND REPORTS					
OTHER DAYS						OTHER (Specify)		OTHER (Specify)					

PART III - AUTHENTICATION (Read paragraph 3-2c, AR 623-105)

A. SIGNATURE OF RATER					TYPED NAME, GRADE, BRANCH, SERVICE NUMBER, ORGANIZATION, AND DUTY ASSIGNMENT					DATE	
B. SIGNATURE OF INDORSER					TYPED NAME, GRADE, BRANCH, SERVICE NUMBER, ORGANIZATION, AND DUTY ASSIGNMENT					DATE	

C. REVIEWER (Read chapter 5, AR 623-105) MY REVIEW ☐ INDICATES NO FURTHER ACTION ☐ RESULTS IN ACTION STATED ON INCLOSURES

SIGNATURE OF REVIEWER					TYPED NAME, GRADE, BRANCH, SERVICE NUMBER, ORGANIZATION, AND DUTY ASSIGNMENT					DATE	
-----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------	--

D. THIS REPORT HAS _____ INCLOSURES. (Insert "0" if appropriate)

DATE ENTERED ON DA FORM 65 _____ PERSONNEL OFFICER'S INITIALS _____

TO COMPLETE PARTS IV, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, AND XI, EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER OFFICERS OF THE SAME GRADE, SIMILAR EXPERIENCE, MILITARY SCHOOLING, AND TIME IN GRADE. ITEMS DESIGNATED BY ASTERISK REQUIRE EXPLANATION IN PART XI.

PART IV - PERSONAL QUALITIES (Read paragraph 4-3d, AR 623-105)

DEGREE		TOP	SECOND	MIDDLE	FOURTH	BOTTOM*	NOT OBSERVED
RATER	INDORSER	1	2	3	4	5	N/O
		a. ADAPTABILITY (Adjusts to new or changing situations)					
		b. AMBITION (Seeks and welcomes, within bounds of military propriety, additional and more important responsibilities)					
		c. APPEARANCE (Possesses military bearing and is neat, smart, and well-groomed)					
		d. COOPERATION (Works in harmony with others as a team member)					
		e. DECISIVENESS (Ability to reach conclusions promptly and decide a definite course of action)					
		f. DEPENDABILITY (Consistently accomplishes desired actions with minimum supervision)					
		g. ENTHUSIASM (Motivates others by his keen interest and personal participation)					
		h. FORCE (Executes actions vigorously)					
		i. INGENUITY (Creative ability in devising means to solve problems)					
		j. INITIATIVE (Takes necessary and appropriate action on his own)					
		k. INTEGRITY (Adherence to principles of honesty and moral courage)					
		l. INTELLIGENCE (Acquires knowledge and grasps concepts readily)					
		m. JUDGMENT (Thinks logically and makes practical decisions)					
		n. LOYALTY (Faithful and willing support to superiors and subordinates)					
		o. MORAL COURAGE (Intellectual honesty, willingness to stand up and be counted)					
		p. NON-DUTY CONDUCT (Keeps his personal affairs in order)					
		q. SELF-DISCIPLINE (Conducts himself in accordance with the highest standards)					
		r. SELF-IMPROVEMENT (Takes action to improve himself)					
		s. SELFLESSNESS (Subordinates his personal welfare to that of the organization)					
		t. SOCIABILITY (Participates freely and fully in social and community activities)					

Figure I, US Army Officer Efficiency Report, DA Form 67-6

PART VI - PERFORMANCE OF DUTY FACTORS (Read paragraph 4-3f, AR 623-105)							PART VIII - PROMOTION POTENTIAL (Read paragraph 4-3h, AR 623-105)			
DEGREE		TOP	SECOND	MIDDLE	FOURTH	BOTTOM*	NOT OBSERVED	R	I	
RATER	INDORSER	1	2	3	4	5	N/O			
		1. DISPLAYS A PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF ASSIGNED DUTIES								PROMOTE AHEAD OF CONTEMPORARIES (EXHIBITS CHARACTERISTICS WHICH SHOULD BRING HIM TO THE HIGHEST POSITIONS IN THE ARMY)
		2. MANAGES RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY AND ECONOMICALLY								PROMOTE AHEAD OF CONTEMPORARIES
		3. ESTABLISHES AND ACHIEVES HIGH STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE								DO NOT PROMOTE AT THIS TIME*
		4. FULFILLS HIS RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUBORDINATES								DO NOT PROMOTE AT THIS TIME*
		5. PLANS BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS OF ASSIGNED DUTIES								
		6. DELEGATES AUTHORITY AS APPROPRIATE								
		7. EXERCISES PROPER DEGREE OF SUPERVISION								
		8. COMMANDS CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT								
		9. ACCEPTS FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ACTIONS								
		10. WILLINGLY ACCEPTS AND ACTS UPON SUGGESTIONS AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM								
		11. EXPRESSES HIMSELF CLEARLY AND CONCISELY ORALLY								
		12. EXPRESSES HIMSELF CLEARLY AND CONCISELY IN WRITING								
		13. MAINTAINS AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF PHYSICAL FITNESS								
		14. HAS CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF SUBORDINATES								
PART VII - DEMONSTRATED PERFORMANCE OF PRESENT DUTY (Read paragraph 4-3g, AR 623-105)										
RATER	INDORSER	PERFORMS THIS DUTY BETTER THAN ANY OTHER OFFICER I KNOW *								HIGHEST MILITARY SCHOOL COMPLETED
		PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY EQUALED BY VERY FEW OFFICERS								SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE AHEAD OF CONTEMPORARIES
		PERFORMS THIS DUTY BETTER THAN MOST OFFICERS								SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE WITH CONTEMPORARIES
		PERFORMS THIS DUTY AS WELL AS MOST OFFICERS								CGC OR EQUIVALENT AHEAD OF CONTEMPORARIES
		PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY MEETS MINIMUM STANDARDS								CGC OR EQUIVALENT WITH CONTEMPORARIES
		PERFORMS THIS DUTY IN AN UNSATISFACTORY MANNER *								NOT RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER SCHOOLING AT THIS TIME
										NOT APPLICABLE
										OTHER (Specify below)
								RATER		
								INDORSER		
								PART X - ASSIGNMENT POTENTIAL (Read paragraph 4-3i, AR 623-105)		
								R	I	1 2 3 4 5* N/O
										POTENTIAL FOR HIGHER LEVEL COMMAND
										POTENTIAL FOR HIGHER LEVEL STAFF
PART XI - COMMENTS (Read paragraph 4-3j, AR 623-105)										
RATER										
INDORSER										
I AM UNABLE TO EVALUATE THIS OFFICER FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:										
PART XII - OVER-ALL VALUE TO THE SERVICE (Read paragraph 4-3k, AR 623-105)										
OFFICERS OF THIS GRADE PERFORMING SIMILAR FUNCTIONS: CURRENTLY RATER OR INDORSE		TOTAL	PLACEMENT OF OFFICERS (Enter * in appropriate group)					RANKING WITHIN OVER-ALL GROUP		
			BOTTOM 5TH	FOURTH	MIDDLE	SECOND	TOP			
ING OF THIS OFFICER IN COMPARISON WITH ALL ARMY OFFICERS OF THIS GRADE AND BRANCH I KNOW WELL ENOUGH TO RATE										
RATER										
		10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90 100

PART I - PERSONAL DATA (Read paragraph 3-2a, AR 623-105)												
a. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL						b. SSN		c. GRADE		d. DATE OF BIRTH Year Month Day		
								e. BRANCH Basic Control		f. SP PROG CODE		
g. UNIT, ORGANIZATION, STATION AND MAJOR COMMAND										h. CODES (Sta - Maj Comd)		
PART II - REPORTING PERIOD AND DUTY DATA (Read paragraph 3-2b, AR 623-105)												
a. Period Covered								b. Reason for Submitting Report		c. Report Based On		
From		Thru		RATED DUTY DAYS		b. NONDUTY DAYS		RATER				
YEAR	MONTH	DAY	YEAR	MONTH	DAY	d. NONRATED DUTY DAYS		e. OTHER DAYS		INDORSER		
						a + b (Total)						
d. EXPLANATION OF NONRATED DUTY DAYS AND/OR OTHER DAYS (As Required)												
PART III - DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES (Read paragraph 4-3d, AR 623-105)												
a. Principal Duty Title						b. Duty MOS			c. Auth Grade			
d. Special Career Program Position Designation						e. Description						
PART IV - PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES (Read paragraph 4-3e, AR 623-105)												
a. RATER: Complete each question. Explain *No and *Needs improvement responses in Part IVb and, if necessary, Part VII.										YES	*NEEDS IMPROVEMENT SOME	*NO
1. Has this officer demonstrated moral and character strength?										1		
2. Did this officer demonstrate technical competence appropriate to his grade and branch?										2		
3. Did this officer state, as appropriate, his honest opinions and convictions? (Not a "yes man")										3		
4. Did this officer seek responsibility?										4		
5. Did this officer willingly accept full accountability for his actions and the actions of his subordinates?										5		
Is this officer emotionally stable under stress?										6		
7. Is this officer's judgment reliable?										7		
8. Did this officer maintain effective two-way communication with juniors, seniors, and peers?										8		
9. Did this officer demonstrate concern for the best interests of his subordinates?										9		
10. Did this officer contribute to the personal and professional development of his subordinates?										10		
11. Did this officer subordinate his personal interests and welfare to those of his organization and subordinates?										11		
12. Did this officer's personal conduct set the proper example for his subordinates?										12		
13. Was this officer innovative in his approach to his duties and responsibilities?										13		
14. Did this officer demonstrate a breadth of perspective and depth of understanding beyond the limit of his specific responsibilities?										14		
15. Did this officer keep himself physically fit?										15		
16. Did this officer fulfill his responsibilities concerning the Army's Equal Opportunity Program?										16		
b. RATER: Explanation: Question(s)												
c. INDORSER: Remarks on all questions, if desired: Question(s)												

Figure 2, US Army Officer Evaluation Report, DA Form 67-7

PART V - DEMONSTRATED PERFORMANCE OF PRESENT DUTY (Read paragraph 4-3f, AR 623-105)						
RATER AND INDORSER: In my judgment, this officer's performance of duty was (place score in applicable box):						
SCORE	Outstanding 70 - 68	Superior 67 - 57	Excellent 56 - 36	Effective 35 - 15	Marginal 14 - 4	Inadequate 3 - 0
RATER	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
INDORSER	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
* You are required to cite SPECIFIC examples or illustrations in Part VII to support this rating.						

RATED OFFICER'S LAST NAME AND SSN					
PART VI - POTENTIAL (Read paragraph 4-3g, AR 623-105)					
a. RATER (Complete each question in the space provided.)					
1. What did this officer do best?					
In what capacity or assignment do you believe this officer would make the greatest contribution to the Army?					
b. RATER AND INDORSER If I had full responsibility and authority, I would (place score in applicable box):					
	Promote this officer immediately	Promote this officer to the next higher grade ahead of his contemporaries	Promote this officer with his contemporaries	Promote this officer to the next higher grade behind his contemporaries	Not promote this officer
SCORE	30	29-24	23-8	7-2	1-0
RATER	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
INDORSER	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
* You are required to cite SPECIFIC examples or illustrations in Part VII to support this rating.					
PART VII - COMMENTS (Read paragraph 4-3h, AR 623-105)					
a. RATER Narrative evaluation is mandatory.					
b. INDORSER Narrative evaluation is mandatory unless the provisions of paragraphs 2-2h and 4-4g, AR 623-105 apply.					
PART VIII - REPORT SCORES			PART IX - AUTHENTICATION (Read paragraph 3-2j, AR 623-105)		
PART	RATER	INDORSER	a. SIGNATURE OF RATER	TYPED NAME (Last, First, MI)	SSN
V			GRADE, BRANCH, ORGANIZATION, DUTY ASSIGNMENT		
VI			b. SIGNATURE OF INDORSER	TYPED NAME (Last, First, MI)	SSN
Sum	a	b	GRADE, BRANCH, ORGANIZATION, DUTY ASSIGNMENT		
REPORT SCORE			c. REVIEWER	MY REVIEW <input type="checkbox"/> INDICATES NO FURTHER ACTION <input type="checkbox"/> RESULTS IN ACTIONS STATED ON INCLOSURES	
1. With INDORSER (a + b) 2. Without INDORSER (2 x a)			SIGNATURE OF REVIEWER	TYPED NAME (Last, First, MI)	SSN
			GRADE, BRANCH, ORGANIZATION, DUTY ASSIGNMENT		
			DATE		
PART X - PERSONNEL OFFICER (Read paragraph 3-2k, AR 623-105)					
a. DATE ENTERED ON DA FORM 55		b. RATED OFFICER COPY (Check one and date)		c. FORWARDING ADDRESS (Rated Officer)	
MPO INITIALS		<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Given to officer <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Forwarded to officer <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Forwarded to indorser <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Forwarded to reviewer		d. DATE RECEIVED	
				e. RATED OFFICER COPY	
				<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Given to officer <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Forwarded to officer <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Returned to MPO	

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
STAFF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

VZCZCSCD 397 S#4675 REUP 129776 0390223
PTTUZYUW RUEADWD8838 0382201-UUUU-RUEADWD.
ZNR UUUU
THIS MESSAGE HAS A COLLECTIVE RI (RUCRAM) DO NOT RE-ENTER
P 072200A FEB 73 ZOC ZED ZEL
FM DA //DACS-ZA//
TO ALARACT
BT

UNCLAS ALARACT 009/73

ABRAMS SENDS

MAAG'S, MISSIONS, MILITARY GROUPS, AND DAO'S RECEIVING DIRECT
ADDRESSEES PASS TO ARMY ELEMENTS FOR ACTION.

1. I HAVE REVIEWED THE NEW OFFICER EVALUATION REPORTING SYSTEM THAT
BECAME EFFECTIVE 1 JAN 73. ITS FUNDAMENTAL AIMS TO DEVELOP REALISTIC
EVALUATION OF OUR OFFICERS AND TO BE AN OPEN SYSTEM HAVE MY PERSONAL
SUPPORT.

2. SOME 200-ODD REPORTS HAVE THUS FAR ARRIVED AT DEPARTMENT OF THE
ARMY. I RECOGNIZE THAT ONE CANNOT DRAW FINAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS
SMALL SAMPLE. NEVERTHELESS, FROM THIS WE CAN SEE THAT THEY ARE
INFLATED BEYOND ANY REASONABLE EXPECTATION. IT IS MY FEELING THAT
THE BASIS OF THIS INFLATION MAY WELL BE A LACK OF CONFIDENCE THAT
REPORT WILL BE UNIFORMLY APPLIED THROUGHOUT THE ARMY, AND FROM THE
COMMANDER'S POINT OF VIEW, HE FEELS, PROBABLY STRONGLY, THAT HE MAY
HURT HIS OFFICERS. COMMENDABLE AS THIS CONCERN MAY BE, IT IS TIME
FOR ALL OF US IN THE ARMY TO PULL UP OUR SOCKS AND MAKE AN OBJECTIVE
PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT IN EVERY CASE.

3. IT IS MY INTENTION TO REVIEW THE RESULTS OF THESE REPORTS
PERIODICALLY BY MAJOR COMMAND, WHICH WE NOW HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO
DO, AND REPORT TO YOU WHETHER OR NOT THE STANDARDS REQUIRED BY
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY DIRECTIVES ARE BEING UNIFORMLY APPLIED.

BT

#8838

NNNN

SCD397 ANNOTATIONS

DACS 9//ARDIST - DOD (DA MEMO 105-1) PLUS DMA-R-PTC A & R-1

PTC/SVC CLK 1

DRAFTER GEN ABRAMS 52077 RELEASER GEN ABRAMS

Figure 3

"Abrams Sends" Message

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER II

EVALUATION AND THE RATER

INTRODUCTION

"Rater" has a specific meaning in the Army's definition of officer evaluation roles. In the context which it is used here, however, a more appropriate word might be "evaluator," since the "rater" behavior described may be equally attributed to anyone in an evaluational role.

Chapter One, in dealing with the evaluative process, discussed the cognitive processes of evaluating. It further depicted some of the barriers a rater may experience in observing, interpreting, and judging a subordinate's personality and performance, in attempting to project his or her potential, and in articulating in the abstract symbology of words, the complexity of a dynamic human organism (the subordinate being rated) interacting with a dynamic social organism (the organization). All this must be done amidst the milieu of the rater's perceptions, biases, values, beliefs, and feelings, compounded by a variety of environmental contaminants. So in large measure, in talking about the evaluation process, we have already talked a great deal about the rater.

Nonetheless, there are other implications of rater behavior which need to be explored.

REINFORCEMENT OF THE RATER'S AUTHORITY

The rater's role, by Army definition, places him in a position of superiority to the ratee. The evaluational role brings the senior-subordinate relationship into sharp and unequivocal focus. Designation of a "rating chain" establishes an authority relationship and clearly defines the primary loyalty of a subordinate to a specific superior. The question, "Who do you work for?," is invariably answered with the answer to "Who is your rater?" The strength and specificity of this authority relationship reinforce the basically authoritarian leadership style of the Army which demands unquestioning obedience to the legal orders of superiors. Because the OER represents the major reward/punishment tool available to the superior, it gives the rater virtually unlimited power over the subordinate, especially in light of Bass's definition¹ of power as "control over others through the use of rewards and punishments" and reinforces the "legitimate power" base of the superior. This complex power relationship finds accurate expression in the knowledge of all Army officers that their rater has "the power of life or death" over them. This power is absolute so long as it is lawfully exercised.

Like all sources of power, the evaluative power of the rater is subject to corruption. Some Army readers may be able to recall instances where the implicit coercive power of the rater has been used for dubious or perhaps even illegal ends. Taking into account Smith's empirically supported hypothesis that "The more power a group member has, the greater the probability that he will use it,"² it is probable that the evaluative process tends to perpetuate an autocratic style of

leadership. (The sociological aspects of this are discussed in Chapter 4.)

CARROT AND STICK

But evaluation is a two-edged sword. It has a "carrot" side and a "stick" side. It is possible, by judicious use of the OER in its "reward" role for a rater to appeal to the self-motivated, achievement oriented bulk of the officer corps, while still having its "punishment" power available to deal with the lower motivated minority. This "carrot" and "stick" use of the OER correlates easily with Douglas McGregor's well-known "Theory X and Theory Y."³ (See Figure 4, page .)

INFLATION AS RATER BEHAVIOR

One of the most significant puzzles of rater behavior is "Why do raters inflate (or overrate) OERs?" Although not easily dissected for analysis due to intricate interdependence, as well as varying affects on varying raters, a few hypotheses can be postulated. No order of importance can be asserted and it is emphasized that separating these "inflationary" forces for purposes of analysis is artificial. In reality they act collectively and synergistically on the rater. Too, no empirical base can be offered for these hypotheses, thus their plausibility depends primarily upon sheer logic (and a few shreds of evidence) along with the ability of the reader to correlate these hypotheses with his past experiences as a rater.

UP OR OUT

First and foremost, it appears that the root cause of rater's leniency tendency (overrating; inflation) is the Army's uncompromising "up or out" promotion system. There is no slack. There is intense competition, especially in today's era of declining promotion rates. There is no margin for error, thus raters tend to safe-side their evaluations. This trend has prompted the widely held belief that everyone inflates their ratings. Raters don't trust other raters to be "objective." Not wanting to disadvantage their ratees in the competition, raters, based on this assumed or perceived inflation, edge their evaluations even higher. And so inflation feeds inflation in an upward spiral not unlike the phenomena of wage-price inflation in the economic sphere. In the end every subordinate is "the best" because raters perceive that even the slightest inference of "less than the best" will adversely affect their subordinates' career. If the subordinate is passed over for promotion twice, consecutively, he's eliminated from the Army. Raters cannot afford the risk of the subordinate's career. The US Coast Guard had a relatively inflation-free evaluation system until they adopted an "up or out" promotion policy. When the unforgiving "up or out" policy was implemented, the result was almost instant infaltion. US Civil Service, lacking the up-or-out pressure, likewise has a relatively inflation-free system. Since it is perfectly acceptable to remain in one's current grade forever, raters feel no need to embellish their evaluations.

RIFs

The leniency tendency described above is exacerbated during periods of force reduction. Unfortunately for the Army, the DA Form 67-7 OER emerged in the post-Vietnam RIF (Reduction in Force) period, creating heightened apprehension on the part of evaluators. The predictable result on rater behavior was even further leniency, ergo, massive inflation.

LOYALTY

One of the most prized attributes of leadership both in and out of the military is loyalty. The Army working relationship demands unquestioning mutual loyalty of senior and subordinate. Human nature enforces it. The enforcement, however, operates to the detriment of the evaluation system. In the words of Douglas McGregor, dean of the managerial behaviorists,

Persons who interact undoubtedly behave as if relationships are reciprocal rather than unilateral. Each investment by the subordinate yields an expectation that the superior will reciprocate with a reward.⁴

Given a choice between loyalty to a hardworking (if average) subordinate, and loyalty to an amorphous "Headquarters, Department of the Army," the rater is prone to be lenient in favor of the subordinate, due to the reciprocal loyalties bred in the cauldron of close proximity and mutual reliance. Loyalty to subordinates is thus stronger than loyalty to Headquarters, Department of the Army.

GROUP COHESION

This reciprocal loyalty phenomena is sometimes voiced from the perspective of unit/group cohesion. Raters fear that less than top

ratings will be perceived as criticism and will adversely affect the motivation, morale, efficiency and support of subordinate officers. Raters are right. In an oft-cited evaluation research project, Meyer, Kay and French report with empirical evidence,⁵ that criticism indeed has a negative effect on subsequent performance. The souring of an officer/leader in a unit can produce unfavorable results in terms of unit/group cohesion and esprit de corps. The informal communications "grapevine" in a unit works with devastating effectiveness when the subject is an OER which is perceived as unjust. Anxieties and self-concerns may erode the cohesion and work environment as well as undermining the credibility and authority of the superior. Chapter Three will deal extensively with this subject.

SPLIT ROLES, COMMUNICATION, AND CONFRONTATION

Another contribution of McGregor⁶ to our understanding of the rater leniency phenomena is his definition of the split roles of evaluation, e.g., administrative (promotion, etc.) and performance counseling, and motivational. McGregor asserts that evaluation tends to place the superior (rater) in the incompatible roles of judge and counselor. He notes that judging subordinates tends to produce defensiveness. This defensive atmosphere (to be explored more fully in the following chapter) inhibits valid communication. According to McGregor,

In attempting to communicate criticisms to a subordinate, the superior usually finds that the effectiveness of the communication is inversely related to the subordinate's need to hear it.⁷

In effect, when piled on with other inflationary-leniency forces, the difficulty in confronting subordinates with critical--even objective--

evaluations causes some raters to acquiesce and overrate, rationalizing to themselves that such rating was necessary to preserve a harmonious, cohesive work environment, and that after all, one more inflated OER is not going to hurt the Army.

LIMITED REWARDS

Another inflationary force on the rater is that in the Army's highly centralized reward/punishment structure most superiors have no tangible way to reward a subordinate officer other than with a red-hot OER. He can't promote him. He can't give him a raise or a bonus. He can't even give him an award; all he can do is recommend. Knowing that DA bestows the significant awards--promotion, selection for schooling, key assignments, and the like--based on the OER file, raters may feel inclined to overrate for want of meaningful alternative rewards.

PERCEPTION OF RATEE SUPERIORITY

A subtle but pervasive influence on rater behavior, and one closely akin to the "loyalty" issue, is that most raters genuinely feel that their subordinates are among the cream of the crop of the officer corps. This perception is prompted and reinforced by the following circumstances:

-- Most commands feel they have the "top 25%," "top 10%," etc., of the officer corps. Perhaps this belief contributes to esprit, but one must wonder where the bottom 25% of the officer corps is assigned. This belief by commands of having a disproportionately high caliber group of officers is allegedly reinforced by some DA agencies who purportedly tell many commands they have only the upper crust.

-- Raters tend to have a very narrow and limited base of observation and comparison. Viewing as they do only a tiny fraction of the officer corps, raters tend to believe their microcosm of the officer corps is "the best," simply because they haven't the opportunity to observe the rest. This perception is no doubt heightened by the rater's ego-involvement with his own job. He intensely believes in the supreme importance of his mission. Since his subordinate's mission is a part of his, it must follow that the subordinate's mission and performance is of supreme importance also. Further, to admit a shortcoming in a subordinate's performance may be threatening to the rater's own self-concept. He or his rater may even view a subordinate's deficiency as a failure of his own leadership, thus the rater may repress the information at OER time. He too is a ratee, and does not want to depict shortcomings which may influence his own OER.

-- Some writers have expressed a belief that the American character is given to superlatives and excess, and that this manifests itself in evaluator behavior as a phenomena labeled "American over-rate."⁸ If this is true in society at large, it is heightened in the semi-closed social structure of the Army which tends toward self-ingratiation. Career Army officers think highly of fellow career Army officers. To think otherwise would produce dissonance over one's own choice to follow that profession. Besides, it is not only correct, but essential that one must revere and respect one's profession. The multiple "weeding-out" processes through which career Army officers must progress fuels a common rater perception that "if he's made it this far, he must be outstanding." Driven by this perception, rater behavior is manifested as lenient, inflated ratings.

SUMMARY

The Strength of Inflationary Pressures

The foregoing discussion has examined the ways in which the officer evaluation system influences rater behavior. Armed with the immense power over subordinates which the OER conveys, a rater's leadership style may be positively reinforced. Some raters, however, may abuse this power to intimidate subordinates.

Intense and pervasive psycho-social pressures on the rater exist which cause him to respond with a tendency toward leniency or in other words, to "inflate" his OERs.

Because the Army is a highly authoritarian organization, vast authority is vested in the Army Chief of Staff. His power to direct, control, and "mold" the Army is undisputed. But the "inflationary" pressure on raters is even stronger than a directive from the Chief of Staff, as was discussed in Chapter One. When General Abrams sent out his famous "Abrams sends . . . Pull up your socks" message (Figure 3) on 7 February 1973, exhorting raters Army-wide to rate "objectively," his guidance was deliberately disobeyed in many commands.⁹ In addressing this phenomena, the Army War College said:

Like a neural impulse, the "Abe Sends" message wend down through the chain of command and into the Army. This same communications process or system is the one which, theoretically at least, directs and moves an enormous aggregate of human and material resources toward the national security objectives. Without this process, an Army cannot function. It is a process of command, and coordination, and control. It is the means through which the will of the Commander-in-Chief and the Chief of Staff is exercised.

With the "Abe Sends" message, this critical command and control system failed to function. The cortex formulated

the message clearly; the nerve system fired the impulse down through a well-used network; but the organism would not respond. Somewhere, among the vast array of variables linked to the Officer Efficiency Reporting System, there existed a factor or force so powerful that it could successfully defy the exercise of ultimate military authority.

The "carrot" side, e.g.,

Motivational power ... correlates with "Theory Y" assumptions about man.

(1) The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest.

(2) External control and the threat of punishment are not the only means of getting men to work toward the organization's objectives. Men will exercise self-direction and self-control toward achieving objectives to which they are committed.

(3) Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement (esteem and self actualization, for example).

(4) Average human beings learn, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility.

(5) Most people are capable of a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in solving organizational problems.

(6) Under the conditions of contemporary working life, the average person's intellectual potentialities are being utilized only partially.

The "stick" side, e.g.,

Coercion/Punishment power ... correlates with "Theory X" assumptions about man.

(1) The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he can.

(2) Because of man's dislike of work, he must be coerced, controlled, directed or threatened with punishment to get him to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives.

(3) The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, and wants security above all.

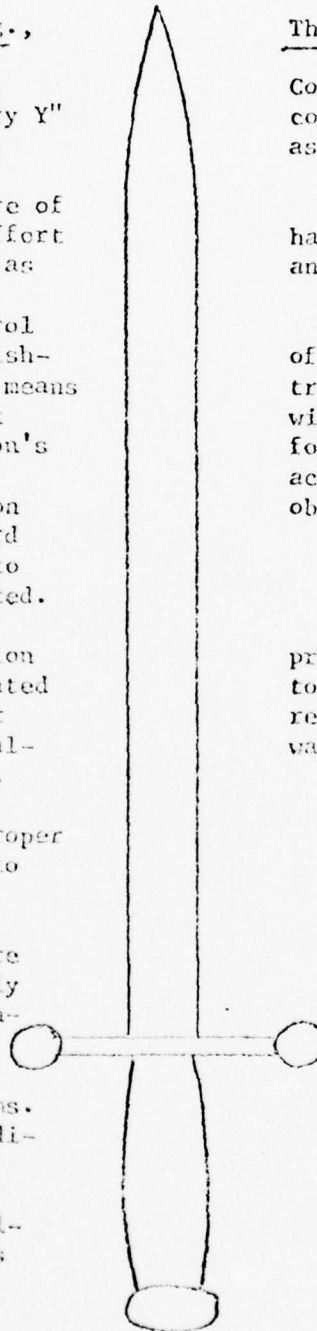


Figure 4

The OER Is a Two-Edged Sword

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER III

EVALUATION AND THE RATEE

INTRODUCTION--"I'VE NEVER WORKED FOR AN OER!"

There is a popular notion that a good officer works at his mission without thought of his OER-to-come. It is popular among officers to assert that "I've never worked for an OER." And certainly (so the myth goes) no self-respecting officer would admit to changing his behavior in such a manner as to curry favor with his boss. But the evidence appears to contradict boastful statements such as these. Edward E. Jones¹ points out that "all of us under appropriate circumstances do shape our social responses to increase our attractiveness to particular people." While "attractiveness" is perhaps not the most appropriate word to describe how ratees desire to appear to their raters, the gist of Jones' article clearly defines the tactic of a less-powerful person (ratee) ingratiating himself with a higher-power person (rater), especially when the high-power person is in a reward-bestowing position. (Such as exists in the dyadic relationship of rater and ratee.)

Readers may be thinking that "this applies to everybody but me, because I'd never stoop to ingratiation." But Jones² goes on to point out that "people are extremely likely to deceive themselves. Not only do they want to avoid publicizing the extent to which their responses to others are conditioned by approval-seeking motives, they work busily to protect themselves from awareness of the link between wanting to be liked and modifying one's behavior to this end." Thus, while it may be hard for some to admit, and may run counter to the folklore of the

independent, self-assured officer, the evidence shows that to some extent everyone behaves in ways designed to enhance their status with their superior (evaluator, rater).

According to one leading expert in the field, subordinate's behavior aimed at seeking the boss's approval is both commonplace and necessary for the subordinate to satisfy his security needs.³ Some of this behavior may thus not be exclusively OER motivated, but may be due to the subordinate's need to work "in an atmosphere of approval."

Too, as noted in Chapter One, an attitude has existed among many Army raters that submitting an Officer Evaluation Report is a rather routine administrative chore, akin to submitting a report on the material status of a unit or any other type of simplistically derived, mechanically completed report. Check the blocks, turn it in, be sure it's not late. Little thought is given to behavioral implications, even though the evaluative process vitally affects the working relationships and "climate" within the organization. The rest of this chapter deals with specific motivational and behavioral effects of officer evaluation on the officer being rated, and why the Army should be concerned.

MOTIVATION AS A RESOURCE

In an era of skyrocketing personnel costs, increased missions, and reduced budgets, the US Army faces crucial resource utilization problems which threaten organizational effectiveness and viability. "How to do more with less?" is an oft-asked question in this environment of austere resources. One answer, yet to be fully explored, is to motivate the high dollar-cost personnel portion of the resource equation to

higher levels of productivity. This maxim is especially germane to the ranks of the officer corps, where direct salary costs are the highest, and where indirect costs may be incurred through the leaders' influence over productivity levels of subordinates.

What, then, influences officer motivation and how can it be enhanced to improve organizational effectiveness? A major thesis of this paper is that officer motivation and effectiveness are dramatically influenced by the officer evaluation system. It is further postulated that the potential for improving officer motivation and effectiveness through the officer evaluation system has yet to be exploited. The potential returns for a low-cost investment in motivation are staggering. For example; hypothesize an active duty officer corps of 100,000 and an average pay-and-allowance package of \$20,000 per year each--or, a total active duty officer salary cost of two billion dollars per year. Now imagine an improvement in productivity and effectiveness of only one percent. The gain in effectiveness is valued at \$20,000,000 per year! (1% x 2 billion.) While this is a purely hypothetical illustration, the real point is that effectiveness gains far exceeding one percent--perhaps in the 25% range--are possible, and for only minimal cost. All that is required is an appreciation of modern motivational theory and its careful incorporation into the Army officer evaluation/reward system.

MOTIVATIONAL DYNAMICS AND THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION

In the US Army, the officer evaluation system serves as the major feedback mechanism for both intrinsic and extrinsic reward systems, e.g., it is the way you find out officially (and for the record) how well

your boss thinks you have done, as well as serving as virtually the sole tangible and influenceable part of the extrinsic reward system. It provides the entre' to promotions, pay increases, tenure, school selection, job placement/advancement, and to all extrinsic rewards of any consequence, save the decorations and awards program. We can assess the motivational dynamics of the evaluative process and its interaction with the reward process in a number of ways. One of the best models for examining this process is provided by Porter and Lawler⁴ in Figure 5. They describe the conceptual foundation of the model as follows:

If we assume that rewards cause satisfaction, and that in some cases performance produces rewards, then it is possible that the relationship found between satisfaction and performance comes about through the action of a third variable--rewards. Briefly stated, good performance may lead to rewards, which in turn lead to satisfaction, this formulation then would say that satisfaction rather than causing performance, as was previously assumed, is caused by it.

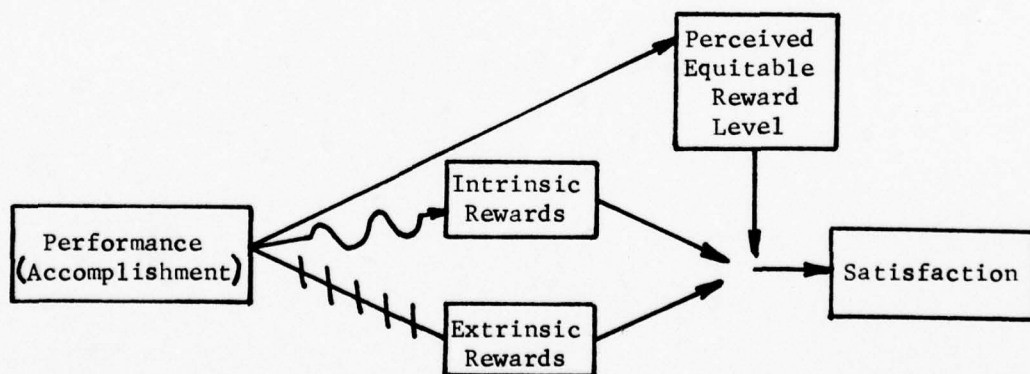


Figure 5

Porter and Lawler's Equity Model of Satisfaction

Significantly, the Army's officer evaluation system holds the key to both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Equally significant is each individual's perception of the degree of equity of his/her reward. If rewards are perceived as equitable for the individual's efforts, satisfaction, positive reinforcement, and motivation to behave similarly in the future occur. If rewards are perceived as inequitable, the behavior is negatively reinforced and dissatisfaction or guilt results.

Because the OER is the tangible and causal part of the reward system, it is from the OER that such perceptions are derived. Such perceptions are at the heart of an individual's motivation, and research evidence is clear that dissatisfaction due to perceived inequitable rewards may lead to negative and dysfunctional behaviors in the future.

How can such dysfunctional behaviors be prevented? More significantly, how can positive, organizationally beneficial behaviors be motivated? Herzberg's dual factor theory⁵ (motivation/hygiene theory) may aid in understanding the motivational dynamics of the Army's officer evaluation process. Herzberg stated that "hygiene" factors, extrinsic in nature, do not motivate, but that their perceived absence or inequity produces dissatisfaction. Thus, a perception of being under-rewarded extrinsically, via one's OER, can lead to dissatisfaction. The motivators, according to Herzberg, are intrinsic, and stem generally from successful experiences within one's job, thereby providing a sense of achievement and positively reinforcing one's self-concept. Perceptions of job success or failure are significantly influenced by OER, thus tying intrinsic "motivators" as well as extrinsic "hygiene factors" to the officer evaluation system.

Looking back to the Porter/Lawler model (Figure 5), it is apparent that the Army's officer evaluation system dominates all avenues to satisfaction, and can produce either positive reinforcement and motivation or negative reinforcement and dissatisfaction, depending upon one's perception of equity of one's OER.

Another useful, more detailed way of examining the issues of equity/satisfaction and inequity/dissatisfaction is provided by Lawler.⁶ (See Figure 6.)

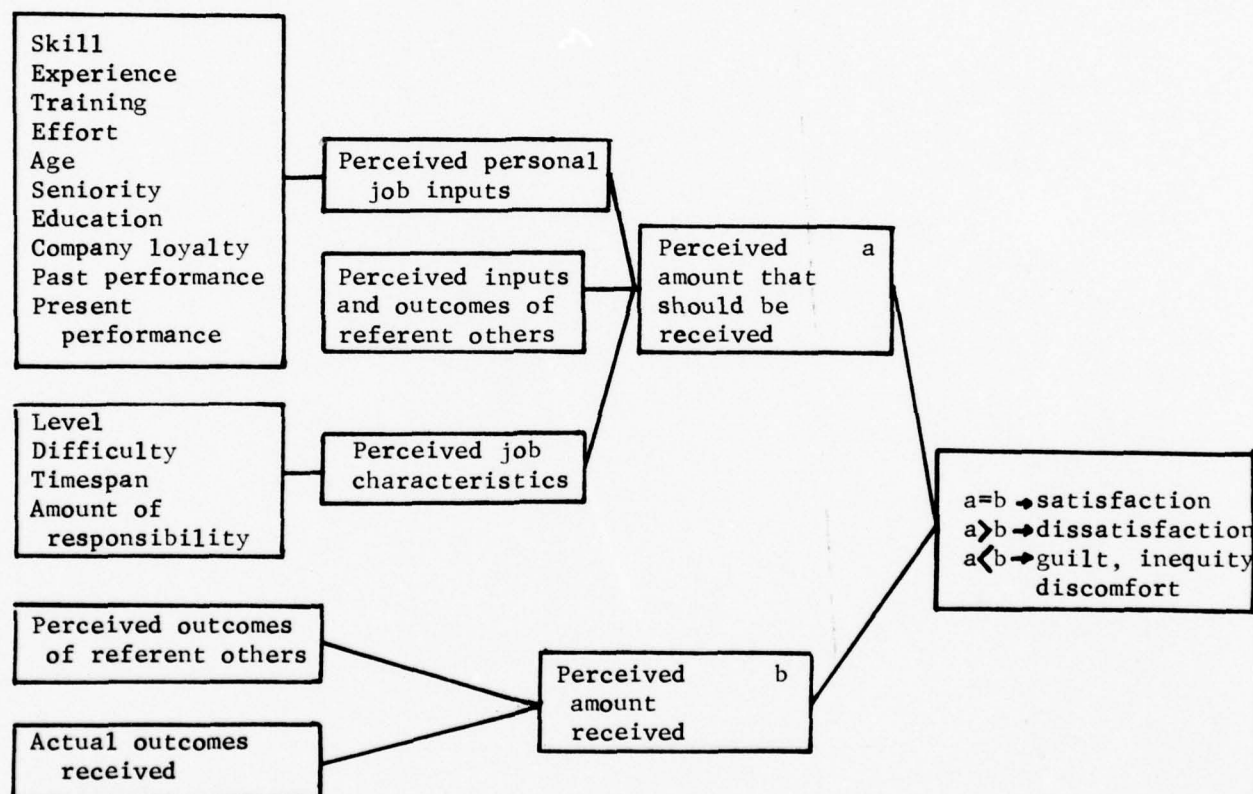


Figure 6

Lawler's Model of the Determinants
of Satisfaction

This model graphically portrays why the OER exerts such a powerful influence over levels of satisfaction. Individual ego needs cause "Perceived personal job inputs" to be high. The same ego needs and a belief in the importance of one's job cause "Perceived job characteristics" to be similarly high. These perceptions combined with knowledge of an "inflated" evaluation system ("outcomes of referent others") and years of being rated "outstanding" cause Army officers to have inordinately high expectations concerning the "Perceived amount that should be received" (Block "a"). When an officer receives an OER, he assesses it in terms of whether it is adequate reward for his inputs, defining, in perceptual terms, his "Perceived amount received" (Block "b"). In the Army system, inordinately high expectations of what should be received (Block "a") can generally be met only with an OER in the "outstanding" category. "Perceived amounts received" less than that cause the recipient to perceive that $a > b$, thereby causing dissatisfaction. Because of unrealistically high reward expectations (Block "a"), the $a > b$ condition is more apt to occur than $a = b$ or $a < b$ conditions.

As regards the implications for Army organizational behavior, it is again stressed that the source of perceptions of equity, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is one's OER. To be perceived as equitable, one's OER must neither overreward nor underreward the individual's perceptions of the value of his inputs vis-a-vis both referent others and his concepts of the relative difficulty of his job.

The foregoing discussion has sought to establish a conceptual frame of reference for a more explicit, via a matrix-type model, discussion of how the evaluative process of the US Army influences the behavior of Army officers.

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ANALYSIS OF RATEE BEHAVIOR

To facilitate analysis of the many complex issues and variables involved in assessing the effects of officer evaluation on ratee behavior, a theoretical model has been constructed. The total model contains eight separate matrix-type modules. Figures 7 through 10 deal with OERs perceived as career-enhancing, while Figures 11 through 14 deal with OERs perceived as career damaging. Most behavioral characteristics are displayed within the context of the model and it will be frequently referred to as the framework for further elaboration. The model is predicated on a synthesis of the writings of numerous prominent behaviorists and is partially footnoted to identify specific sources. The works of Campbell, Dunette, Lawler, Wieck, Maslow, McGregor, Combs, Steers, Porter, Snygg, Leavitt, Herzberg, Schein, Shaw, Thompson, Dalton, Kindell, Gatza, Meyer, Kay, French, Roethlisberger, Beon, Festinger, Homans, and others have influenced the model.

Certainly the feelings and behaviors described in the model are not universal and do not apply in equal measure to the diverse personalities represented in the officer corps. Not all people perceive the same external-world situation identically, and not all people will react identically to essentially similar perceptions. Thus the model is not absolute, but rather is normative, hopefully reflecting the manner in which most officers respond most of the time in the evaluative circumstances described. Note particularly that the entire model is predicated on the ratee's perception of his OER. Whether those perceptions are true or not is immaterial, for to the recipient of the OER, they are true. His perception is the only reality he can know.⁷

RATEE PERCEPTIONS OF OERs

Upon receiving an OER, ratees intuitively assess it in terms of whether or not he sees the reward (OER) as adequate compensation for his investment (time, work commitment, etc.). This is a natural reaction of officers who perceive the life-or-death importance of their OERs. Further, since the Army has a poor track record in the area of counseling, many ratees may lamentably have to wait until OER time to find out how they stand with their raters. Thus it is from the OER that officers may deduce their status with their boss(es) as well as their competitiveness in their career.

CAREER ENHANCING OERs, THE SELF-CONCEPT, AND

CONSTRUCTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

When an officer perceives his OER as career enhancing and non-critical, he senses satisfaction of his ego-level needs⁸ and positive reinforcement of his self-concept. Since criticism produces negative results with respect to subsequent organizational behavior,⁹ the corollary would appear to be that noncritical appraisals produce positive (e.g., constructive, effective) organizational behavior. The evidence is ambiguous on this point but tends to show that positive, (e.g., non-negative) evaluation feedback, supportive of the ratee's self-concept, does not automatically produce organizationally desirable (constructive, effective) behavior, only that it permits it to occur.¹⁰ In any event there is an unmistakable relationship between evaluation, one's self-concept, and his organizational behavior. In this relationship is a clear message for the Army. The following passage from Combs

and Snygg's book, Individual Behavior,¹¹ is a succinct summary of why the Army must be cautious in tampering, via the evaluation system, with the self-concepts of its officers.

A self-concept organized of many positive self-definitions provides the individual with a great resource for dealing with the vicissitudes of life. Many positive self-perceptions give the individual a feeling of adequacy and confidence, so that he approaches the events of life with an essentially positive, assured bearing which, in itself, is an important head start. Research on leadership suggests that leaders generally possess more favorable attitudes toward self and others. The very presumption of success is likely to make success more likely. Moreover, positive self-perceptions are conducive to still further perceptions of the same order. This is a common observation which finds its place in our folk sayings: "Nothing succeeds like success," "Them as has, gets," "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer."

The positive self-perceptions characteristic of the adequate personality act also as a reservoir against which negative, damaging experiences are perceived in a more accurate and realistic perspective. Because the self is overwhelmingly defined in positive terms, most negative self-perceptions can be readily assimilated in such a reservoir with little or no disturbance to the whole structure. Negative events can be accepted and taken in stride. Feeling fundamentally self-confident, the adequate person is less ruffled by unhappy events. He finds it possible to take criticism calmly and to evaluate it clearly. Instead of being disorganized by minor self-damaging experiences, negative perceptions are evaluated against the larger mass of basically positive experience, in which perspective they seem far less important or overwhelming.

Since adequate personalities do not feel deprived, they have far less need to defend the self against external attack. Assaults upon self do not seem crucial or overwhelming. Rather, they seem well within the capacities of the self to cope with and even, if they are minor attacks, may be perceived by the adequate personality as exciting and challenging opportunities to test his mettle. For adequate persons, self testing can itself be an exhilarating experience to be met with interest and joy. For such people the trying is often more exciting and enhancing than the achieving. The possession of a large reservoir of positive experience of self provides the

individual with a vast security to be used as a base for adventure and a firm foundation for meeting even the more difficult aspects of life with courage.

This fundamentally positive self organization seems characteristic of "well-adjusted" people seen from an external frame of reference as well. Numerous studies of "adjustment" have demonstrated that well-adjusted persons have essentially positive attitudes toward self and others, while the reverse is true of "poorly adjusted" people. Psychological health seems basically determined by the adequacy of the individual's self definitions. Effective living is closely allied to personal feelings of dignity and integrity, to feelings of worth and self actualization.

THE MODEL--DISCUSSED SEQUENTIALLY

Module 1. In Module 1 (Figure 7) we are able to trace the perceptions, emotions, and behaviors of an officer who has received a "career enhancing" OER from a rater with whom he enjoys a favorable relationship. In this case the good report was perceived as justified. Notice that the individual's self-perceptions are all positive and the sort which reinforce his sense of adequacy and self-esteem. He is able to perceive the world around him undistortedly because he has no great necessity to filter his perceptions in order to defend his ego.¹² He is "satisfied" both rationally and emotionally. He is trusting toward his rater because he senses fairness in this reward for his investment with the rater, the unit, and the Army. The psychological contract has been fulfilled.¹³ The reciprocal relationship of superior and subordinate has been strengthened.¹⁴ Based on his perceptions of self and superior, the ratee in these circumstances is apt to behave in a constructive and supportive manner with respect to his superior and the organization. He will behave more effectively because he perceives his

MODULE 1

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EVALUATION
ON US ARMY OFFICER BEHAVIOR

CUES: Individual perceives his OER as CAREER ENHANCING, and his relationship with rater is FAVORABLE, and the report is actually JUSTIFIED.

PERCEPTION (as articulated to self):

"I worked hard and got my just reward. I'm doing great."

COGNITIVE RESPONSE: Perception of high degree of equity of reward for investment.^a Complete fulfillment of psychological contract. High level of need-satisfaction. High level of self-esteem and feelings of adequacy. Accurate self-concept. With respect to superior, perceives "I'm O.K.-- You're O.K." High level of acceptance, respect, and trust for superior and organization.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE: Levels of anxiety and frustration are low-to-none. No dissonance.

MOTIVATIONAL RESPONSE: High level of aspiration with regard to future performance. High level of expectancy regarding goal-attainment and future performance. Self-confident.

PROBABLE EFFECT ON FUTURE BEHAVIOR: High level of loyalty toward superior and organization. Open, valid communicator. Highly flexible, creative, innovative. Able to evaluate self and others accurately. Capable of exercising positive leadership. Generally positive, constructive, and functional behavior.

FOOTNOTES: ^aEdward E. Lawler, III, Motivation in Work Organizations, (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1973), pp. 67 and 75. The favorableness of the rater-ratee relationship and knowledge of own adequate performance would create expectancy of a high reward. When perceived reward = expected reward, high satisfaction is attained.

Figure 7

Behavioral Effects--Career Enhancing OER, Justified,
from Favorable Rater

personality as adequate.¹⁵ He will be better able to tolerate the ambiguities of life¹⁶ and will have the courage and broad frame of reference to develop innovative and creative solutions to life's problems.¹⁷ Having little need to be defensive, he will find it easier to behave toward his fellow man without hostility.¹⁸

In a study of self-acceptance, Berger¹⁹ found that the adequate personality has these feelings about himself:

1. Relies on internalized values and standards.
2. Has faith in capacity to cope with life.
3. Assumes responsibility for and accepts causes of own behavior.
4. Accepts praise or criticism objectively.
5. Does not deny or distort feelings, motives, abilities in self.
6. Sees self as person of worth on equal plane with others.
7. Does not expect others to reject him.
8. Does not regard self as queer or abnormal.
9. Is not shy or self-conscious.

And these feelings about others:

1. Does not hate, reject, or pass judgment on others when different from self.
2. Does not attempt to dominate.
3. Does not assume responsibility for others.
4. Does not deny worth or equality of others.
5. Shows desire to serve others.
6. Has active interest in others, desires to create mutually satisfactory relationships.
7. In advancing self is careful not to infringe rights of others.

Implications of Module 1

Undoubtedly these are the behaviors we seek in an officer. These are the behaviors which result in personal effectiveness and maximum contribution to the organization.²⁰ Significantly for the Army, for the unit concerned, and for the individual, no other combination of circumstances appears to permit these behaviors. Empirical research evidence by Meyer, Kay, and French²¹ shows that perceived criticism has a negative effect on achievement of goals and that defensiveness resulting from critical appraisal produces inferior performance. In an era of diminished officer corps strength and rising personnel costs, the Army must ask fewer people to do more. The implications of evaluation on officers' propensity to perform effectively needs no further elaboration.

This is not intended to infer that the only force which drives officer corps behavior is the OER. Certainly a host of other motivational influences exists including deep and genuine love of the Army and the country and love of the special challenges which officers experience in their profession. It does suggest, however, that when the individual is repaid by the Army for his devotion to duty with a less-than-adequate OER, the "worthwhileness" of that devotion may be called into serious question.

Module 2 (Figure 8). Here we see the responses of a ratee to a justified career-enhancing OER from a rater with whom his relationship was perceived as unfavorable. Notice that the feelings about self are generally all positive. They may be dampened somewhat, however, by a nagging sensation of "waiting for the shoe to drop." Feelings toward his superior (rater) may be influenced by the apparent dichotomy of

MODULE 2

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EVALUATION
ON US ARMY OFFICER BEHAVIOR

CUES: Individual perceives his OER as CAREER ENHANCING and relationship with rater is UNFAVORABLE, and report is actually JUSTIFIED.

PERCEPTION (as articulated to self): "He's not the best boss I ever had, but at least I came out of this O.K. Maybe he's finally recognized my contribution."

COGNITIVE RESPONSE: Perception of exceptionally high degree of equity of reward for investment; exceptional because it was unexpected due to unfavorable relationship. Complete fulfillment of psychological contract. High level of need satisfaction. Lessening of interpersonal tension due to surviving under an unfavorable rater-ratee relationship. High level of self-esteem and feelings of adequacy. Somewhat uncertain over self-concept, due to inconsistent feedback. With respect to superior, perceives "I'm O.K.--You're O.K. . . . I think . . . but I'm not sure since you're sending me mixed signals."

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE: Frustration level low-to-none. Mild anxiety and dissonance due to inconsistency of feedback.

MOTIVATIONAL RESPONSE: High level of aspiration and with regard to future performance. Moderately self-confident. Moderate level of expectancy regarding future performance. (Still worried about uncertainty of relationship.)

PROBABLE EFFECT ON FUTURE BEHAVIOR: High level of loyalty toward organization and moderate level of loyalty toward rater. Supportive; explorative in attempts to promote a more favorable relationship. Moderate acceptance and trust toward rater. Moderately closed in communications due to uncertainty of reaction by rater. Moderately flexible and creative. Significant energies directed at improving relationship rather than directed at tasks. Moderately effective leader, and moderately effective evaluator of others; hindered in these areas by uncertainty of self-concept.

Figure 8

Behavioral Effects--Career Enhancing OER, Justified,
from Unfavorable Rater

receiving a career-enhancing OER from a rater with whom his relationship was basically unfavorable. While such instances are probably few in number, they doubtless exist, and the ratee, while sighing in relief, would likely look for ways to engender a more favorable relationship.

Module 3 (Figure 9). In this instance an unjustified career-enhancing OER is received from a superior in a favorable relationship. Data does not exist to confirm my suspicions, but it is likely that a significant number of reports in this category are rendered. Because the ratee perceives that his performance was actually inadequate to justify the report, it may be inferred that the basis for the report was the "favorableness" of the relationship, not the performance. Army readers may be able to recall from personal experience examples of OERs where the report was so influenced by the favorable interpersonal relationship between rater and ratee that deficient performance was not reported. The conscientious ratee, however, while accepting the report gratefully, probably feels mild dissonance because he knows it was not deserved. This situation is almost certain to reinforce the ingratiating, game-playing behavior with which the ratee covered up his deficient performance, e.g., flattery, servility, "brown nosing," etc.

Module 4 (Figure 10). In this situation, the rater has compromised both himself and the evaluation system by submitting an unjustified career-enhancing OER on a subordinate with whom he had an unfavorable relationship. Most would label the ratee "lucky." Doubtless he feels lucky, but cannot help but be suspicious as to the rater's motives. While experiencing dissonance and anxiety over these

MODULE 3

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EVALUATION
ON US ARMY OFFICER BEHAVIOR

CUES: Individual perceives his OER as CAREER ENHANCING, and his relationship with rater is FAVORABLE, and report is actually UNJUSTIFIED.

PERCEPTION (as articulated to self): "I guess I was really lucky. He's a good guy, but he's slack. I'm sure glad he didn't write a true report."

COGNITIVE RESPONSE: Perception of substantial inequity at having been overrewarded for less-than-adequate performance.^{a,b} Cognitions may be rearranged in an effort to reduce incongruities.^c (e.g., "I don't guess I did such a bad job after all!") Level of need-satisfaction is only moderate, since the recipient of the OER knows his performance did not justify the reward bestowed (the career-enhancing OER). His level of self-esteem is initially lowered as a result of accepting a disproportionately high reward. Later, however, his level of self-esteem may rise as he distorts his cognition to reduce the dissonance created by the inequity of the reward.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE: Moderate level of anxiety and dissonance. Guilt feelings produce a state of tension.^d

MOTIVATIONAL RESPONSE: The presence of inequity and resultant dissonance will motivate the individual to reduce inequity.^e He may increase his inputs to the organization so that a balance of inputs to outputs (reward) is attained.^f These higher aspirations created to reduce the dissonance experienced due to inequity may be moderated over time to align them with levels of expectation more realistically consistent with known performance abilities. The favorable relationship may be seen as the key to future career-enhancing evaluations and promote an obsession with behavior aimed at keeping the boss happy.

PROBABLE EFFECT ON FUTURE BEHAVIOR: Likely to develop two separate but simultaneous themes of organizational behavior; one a desirable one to increase his efforts to attain an input-output balance. The other is a less desirable repertoire of behaviors which are submissive, compliant, and game-playing in nature, aimed at sustaining a favorable relationship with superiors which will tide him over possible future performance deficiencies. (As the favorable relationship seems to have overridden the deficient performance in this case and produced an unjustified, career-enhancing OER.) Future behaviors are likely to be only moderately flexible and creative since deviation from past performance trends may be risky. Ability to evaluate others is reduced because of internal dissonance over own evaluation. May tend to evaluate others leniently since "I got a good report for inadequate performance, why shouldn't I do the same for my subordinates? Besides if I overreward them, they can't complain about my being overrewarded."

FOOTNOTES: ^aRichard M. Steers and Lyman W. Porter, *Motivation and Work Behavior* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), p. 141. ^b"When the normative expectations of the person making social comparisons are

Module 3 (continued)--Notes

violated, when he finds that his outcomes and inputs are not in balance, feelings of inequity result."

^bEdward E. Lawler, III, Motivation in World Organizations (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1973), p. 69. "Over-reward leads to feelings of guilt."

^cIbid., p. 147. "Individuals do modify or rearrange their cognition in an effort to reduce perceived incongruities. . . . Cognitive distortion may be adopted as a means of reducing inequity."

^dSteers and Porter, Motivation and Work Behavior, p. 143. ". . . there can be little doubt that inequity results in dissatisfaction, in an unpleasant emotional state . . . (of) anger or guilt."

^eIbid., pp. 144 and 159.

^fLawler, Motivation in Work Organization, p. 18. "The presence of inequity will motivate an individual to reduce inequity. The strength of the motivation to reduce inequity varies directly with the perceived magnitude of the imbalance between inputs and outcomes."

Figure 9

Behavioral Effects--Career Enhancing OER, Unjustified,
from Favorable Rater

MODULE 4

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EVALUATION
ON US ARMY OFFICER BEHAVIOR

CUES: Individual perceives his evaluation as CAREER ENHANCING and his relationship with his rater is UNFAVORABLE, and the report is actually UNJUSTIFIED.

PERCEPTION (as articulated to self): "I managed to come out of that one O.K.! I wonder what that two-faced SOB has in mind."

COGNITIVE RESPONSE: Perception of slight inequity and guilt at having been overrewarded for less than adequate performance.^a Magnitude of inequity feelings is diminished by a rationalization that "The boss was the bad guy; I was the good guy; therefore the career enhancing OER is justified." (When it really isn't!) Cognitions may be rearranged so that the deficient performance is blamed on the unfavorable rater, making the reward seem more nearly equal to the input. Nevertheless some dissonance is probable, as it is unlikely that all blame for the deficient performance can be projected to the rater. The level of need satisfaction is moderately high, largely as a result of the projective mechanism described above, plus a feeling of satisfaction at having survived under an unfavorable rater. Level of self-esteem is also moderately high for the same reasons.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE: Moderate anxiety and dissonance, fading as projective mechanisms shift the blame to the rater, permitting restoration of a more positive self-concept. Tension is likely due to inconsistency of feedback from rater, and guilt feelings from inequity of reward.^b

MOTIVATIONAL RESPONSE: Suspicion over rater's motives may produce an uncertain level of expectation regarding future rewards from the same rater. Future aspiration levels may actually be lower, as the ratee has seen that deficient performance, even under an unfavorable rater, is still rewarded . . . why set loftier goals?^c

PROBABLE EFFECT ON FUTURE BEHAVIOR: Cautious, closed, game-playing behavior. Submissive, deferential, and compliant response to rater is likely. Apt to adopt behavioral patterns which minimize risk, as he is already uncertain what to expect due to mixed signals from rater. Ability to evaluate others is impaired due to uncertainty of own self-concept.

FOOTNOTES: a. Lawler, Motivation in Work Organizations, p. 69.

"Over-reward leads to feelings of guilt."

b. Steers and Porter, Motivation and Work Behavior, p. 143.

"There can be little doubt that inequity results in dissatisfaction, in an unpleasant emotional state . . . (of) anger or guilt."

c. David J. Cherrington, et al, "Effects of Contingent and Non-contingent Reward on the Relationship Between Satisfaction and Task Performance," in Journal of Applied Psychology, (December 1971), pp. 531-536.

Figure 10

Behavioral Effects--Career Enhancing OER, Unjustified,
from Unfavorable Rater

motives, his future behavior toward the rater will probably be cautious and closed. So that he won't rock the boat with this rater, he may be unusually passive and compliant and would probably be unwilling to risk his status by potentially controversial innovative, creative work behavior.

REPORTS PERCEIVED AS CAREER DAMAGING

If a ratee perceives an OER as career damaging or critical, a Pandora's Box of attitudinal, behavioral, and organizational consequences is opened. While there may indeed be subsequent career consequences, from a behavioral standpoint, it doesn't matter whether the report is actually career-damaging; only the ratee's perception counts.

Because such a perception is inconsistent with an individual's need to maintain a sense of adequacy and self-esteem, one of the significant results of such a report is cognitive dissonance in the ratee.²² And because of the importance of the dissonant OER in the ratee's career and life, the magnitude of dissonance may be extreme.²³ To alleviate this dissonance, the ratee will frequently blame the bad OER on the offending "system."²⁴ Thus, a major side-effect of reports perceived as career damaging is the vitriolic damnation of "the lousy OER system." It is far more acceptable to the ratee whose self-concept has been wounded to loose his frustrations and emotions on the nebulous "system" than to acknowledge that perhaps the reported deficiencies are true. Further, it is safer than open criticism of the superiors who wrote the report, as they could "fight back." But the system can be safely

berated--and often is. The deficiency cannot be integrated into the ratee's perception of himself and is thus projected to "the system."

Another dissonance-reduction process is simply the suppression of possible past behaviors which may have contributed to the career-damaging OER.²⁵ By selective suppression, a ratee may either distort (favorably) or erase from his perceptive field dissonant memories of his inadequate performance. In order to preserve one's sense of adequacy, it is thus difficult to admit that a critical "career damaging" OER may have been justified. Rational-logical perceptions are probably clouded over by overriding sentiments and emotions stemming from this direct threat to one's sense of adequacy.

"Anxiety and its accompanying tensions are inseparable partners of inadequacy feelings," according to prominent perceptual psychologists.²⁶ If the feelings of inadequacy are strong, neurosis or even psychosis can be the result.²⁷ Such maladjusted personalities may resort to extreme forms of behavior unacceptable to the Army and to society at large. On a less extreme scale, the maladjustment may simply result in anti-Army feelings sufficiently strong to cause the individual to resign from the Army in frustration, bitterness, and hatred.

Module 5 (Figure 11). A career-damaging OER received from a rater with whom a favorable relationship has been enjoyed is a traumatic experience, even though it is perceived as justified. Admitting the justification for such a report may be the most painful part of all. Because of the favorableness of the relationship, the ratee may feel particularly wronged since he was probably counting on that

MODULE 5

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EVALUATION
ON US ARMY OFFICER BEHAVIOR

CUES: Individual perceives his evaluation as CAREER DAMAGING, his relationship with his rater is FAVORABLE, and the evaluation is actually JUSTIFIED.

PERCEPTION (as articulated to self): "That two-faced SOB; he treated me good except for my OER! I thought I was going to do O.K. on my OER despite a few minor problems with the job."

COGNITIVE RESPONSE: Moderately low perception of equity of reward for input. The receipt of a career-damaging OER would normally cause a very low perception of equity but in this case, that perception is mitigated by a partially suppressed realization that the bad OER was justified. The threat to the recipient's self-concept would cause him to suppress many of the reasons for the bad OER and to hold them at a low order of differentiation in his perceptual field.^a Levels of need satisfaction and levels of feelings of self-esteem and adequacy would be low, in proportion to the degree of acknowledgement that the bad OER was justified. (The more you admit you're deficient, the lower the sense of self-esteem and adequacy.) The favorable relationship with the rater may cause the bad OER to appear as a major discrepancy, as the favorable relationship would tend to cause the ratee to have a high expectancy of reward, which stands in contrast to the low actual reward.^b To preserve the sense of personal adequacy, rationalization of the deficient performance is likely.^c

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE: High state of anxiety, tension, and dissonance.^d Self-directed aggression is likely. If the ratee had a strong self-concept, he is likely to be able to accept the justification for the bad OER. If he had a weak self-concept and could not integrate this threatening perception into his self-concept, he is apt to project this aggression toward the rater as latent or overt hostility and anger.

MOTIVATIONAL RESPONSE: In this situation, levels of aspiration regarding future performance are difficult to predict. If the individual had a strong self-concept and were sufficiently dedicated to the organization, he might be able to psychologically digest this situation and resolve to do better next time. If, however, he began with a weak self-concept and/or weak commitment to the organization, he may calculate a low expectancy of future success in that endeavor, set lower standards for himself, or, if the alternative existed, leave the organization entirely. Due to the bad OER's threat to self-concept, defensiveness is probable.^e Lowered self-esteem apt to lower future motive to perform well.^f

PROBABLE EFFECT ON FUTURE BEHAVIOR: As noted under the "Motivational Response" heading, motives for future behavior are particularly difficult to predict in this circumstance. Future behavior is especially dependent in this case, on the strength of the individual's self-concept. He may transfer his self-directed aggression to his rater, and adopt a more resistant, inflexible style of behavior^g vis-a-vis his rater. Or he may simply take the report in stride, acknowledge his deficiencies, and charge ahead.^h Research exists to suggest that when a low performer is not rewarded, he will be dissatisfied but his later performance will improve.

FOOTNOTES: a. Combs and Snygg, Individual Behavior, pp. 276 and 287.

b. Lawler, Motivation in Work Organizations, p. 67.

c. Combs and Snygg, p. 154. "Rationalizations, in which people may be found giving good reasons instead of real reasons for their behavior are a form of seeking for better organization by which inconsistent events can be brought into closer harmony with existing self-concepts."

d. Combs and Snygg, p. 184. "The individual may be placed in a position wherein his perceptions of what he has done . . . are seriously inconsistent and hence threatening to another concept of self. As a consequence he may show tension arising from the threat he perceives."

e. Combs and Snygg, p. 187. ". . . derogatory perceptions of self produce feelings of threat and consequent defenses against such perceptions."

f. Lawler, p. 54. ". . . motivating low-self-esteem people to perform well is difficult, since they are predisposed to believing they cannot perform well."

g. Combs and Snygg, p. 171.

h. Cherrington, pp. 531-536.

Figure 11

Behavioral Effects--Career Damaging OER, Justified,
from Favorable Rater

favorableness to "pull him through." Having enjoyed such a favorable relationship with his rater, the ratee can be expected to feel particularly bitter and antagonistic. A high level of dissonance can be expected because the ratee has admitted to himself the justifications for the substandard evaluation, thus he must endure the anxieties produced by admitting inadequacy. In all probability, however, an individual who can acknowledge his deficiencies and faults sufficiently to say his bad OER was indeed justified has a strong sense of adequacy to begin with. If he did not have a strong sense of adequacy, his defensive mechanisms would product filtered perceptions and not allow unfiltered criticisms to enter the phenomenal field.

Module 6 (Figure 12). In this case a bad OER has been received from a rater with whom an unfavorable relationship has existed. The ratee has perceived that the report was justified, thus triggering the dissonance, anxieties, and defensiveness which occur when one's self-concept is threatened. The admission of justification for career-damaging OER is fairly strong evidence of a healthy self-concept at the outset, but the realization that both the performance and the relationship with superior were unsatisfactory will cause a drastic downward reassessment of the ratee's sense of adequacy. Such a ratee may frequently be expected to conclude that "All is lost. I have no future with this organization." Faced with a feeling of failure, the most reasonable way he sees to cope with the threat situation is to adopt the "flight"²⁸ mode of behavior--to resign from the Army. Because he has admitted that the bad OER was justified, the dissonance experienced is apt to be persistent since he has no way of transferring or projecting the source of dissatisfaction.

MODULE 6

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EVALUATION
ON US ARMY OFFICER BEHAVIOR

CUES: Individual perceives his OER as CAREER DAMAGING, his relationship with his rater is UNFAVORABLE, and the evaluation is actually JUSTIFIED.

PERCEPTION (as articulated to self): "I should have seen this coming. I've had it now."

COGNITIVE RESPONSE: The career-damaging OER and its connotation of personal inadequacy would normally cause a very high level of cognitive dissonance, but in this case, dissonance is somewhat moderated projection of the deficiencies to the unfavorable rater and a reordering of cognitions.^a Too, the ratee began with a strong self-concept in order to acknowledge that the bad OER was justified. The person with a strong self-concept is able to internalize an isolated example of personal deficiency than one with a weaker self-concept.^b The individual in this case would perceive moderately low equity for his investment; low because of the career-damaging OER, but moderated by the acknowledgement that it was justified. With both his performance and his relationship with his superior deficient, the individual would cognitively re-examine--and lower--his self-concept, experiencing low need satisfaction and low levels of self-esteem. Perceives "I'm not O.K.--You're not O.K."

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE: Anxiety, tension, and frustration levels are both high and persistent.^c By "owning the problem," e.g., acknowledging that the bad OER was justified, dissonance reduction techniques generally fail to reduce levels of anxiety and tension. The bad OER would exacerbate the already unfavorable relationship with the rater, and cause resentment, low acceptance, and outwardly directed hostility. The targets of such hostility may vacillate; sometimes being the rater (because of the bad OER and unfavorable relationship), and sometimes a vague attack on "the system," because the individual has acknowledged that the bad OER is justified and therefore cannot be shifted to the rater. Inability to transfer the problem would sustain a high level of frustration and sporadic self-directed aggression.

MOTIVATIONAL RESPONSE: If the career-damaging OER is unique, e.g., an exception, levels of aspiration and expectation may remain moderately high. If on the other hand, the career-damaging OER is part of a pattern, levels of aspiration and expectation are likely to be exceptionally low. Defensiveness toward the unfavorable rater would render the individual less supportive. Faced with the bad OER, the unfavorable relationship with the rater, and the self-admitted deficient performance, may adopt the "flight" mode of coping behavior. Some sort of defensive coping behavior is a certainty, and lowered self-esteem is apt to lower the individual's future motive to perform well.^d

MODULE 6 (continued)

PROBABLE EFFECT ON FUTURE BEHAVIOR: Because of a severely threatened self-concept, future behavior is apt to be relatively closed, inflexible and uncreative.^e Resistance to the rater and organization is likely. The lowered self-concept would reduce leadership effectiveness, and lessen the individual's ability to accurately evaluate others. As a function of the desirability of available alternatives, opt to flee the organization, or "leave the field."^f

FOOTNOTES: a. Steers and Porter, Motivation and Work Behavior, p. 147.

"... individuals do modify or rearrange their cognitions in an effort to reduce perceived incongruities."

b. Combs and Snygg, Individual Behavior, p. 242.

c. Ibid., p. 184. "The individual may be placed in a position wherein his perceptions of what he has done . . . are seriously inconsistent and hence threatening to another concept of self. As a consequence he may show tension arising from the threat he perceives."

d. Lawler, Motivation in Work Organizations, p. 54. "... motivating low-self-esteem people to perform well is difficult, since they are predisposed to believing they cannot perform well."

e. Combs and Snygg, p. 171. "... the experience of threat is often accompanied by decreased efficiency and adaptability to a task."

f. Steers and Porter, Motivation and Work Behavior, p. 148.

Figure 12

Behavioral Effects--Career-Damaging OER, Justified,
from Unfavorable Rater

Module 7 (Figure 13). The most unjust of evaluation situations is experienced here. A favorable relationship with the rater has been experienced, and there is no perceived justification for a career-damaging OER--yet it has been received. Under such circumstances the ratee will probably experience anger at his rater, anxiety over implications for his career, and alienation toward the Army. In his view, he has been "screwed royally." He perceives injustice in the apparent breach of the informal contract of reciprocity between himself and his rater. He perceives punishment for his work, rather than reward. His views of his rater will be unaccepting and intolerant and he will view that rater as "two-faced"; "a backstabber" who presented a front of a favorable relationship then failed to support him when the chips were down. His anger at the rater, the system (evaluation), and more obliquely, the Army, may evoke a coping response in the "fight" mode (according to Beon).²⁹ His "fight" mode of behavior may take many forms, but more common ones would be to attack and discredit his rater among his (the ratee's) peers, formal appeal (reclama) of the OER, request for transfer out of the rater's sphere of authority (e.g., to another unit), and vocal attacks on the "unfairness" of the evaluation system. Depending upon the specific personalities and the situation, the ratee may or may not opt for a direct confrontation with the rater over the basis for the OER.

This officer may or may not have a legitimate complaint. If his perception was accurate and the bad report was indeed unjustified, his furor is certainly legitimate. If the bad report was justified, however, what we have is an elaborate defense mechanism operating to

MODULE 7

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EVALUATION
ON US ARMY OFFICER BEHAVIOR

CUES: Individual perceives his OER as CAREER DAMAGING, his relationship with his rater as FAVORABLE, and the evaluation is actually UNJUSTIFIED.

PERCEPTION (as articulated to self): "That two-faced SOB really put it to me! I worked hard for him and this is the thanks I get!"

COGNITIVE RESPONSE: Perception of extreme inequity^a of reward (under-reward) and very low level of need satisfaction.^b Self-concept is threatened by the negative feedback of the bad OER, but a strong defense against the negative feedback is available in the knowledge that the report was unjustified and the performance better than reflected on the OER. The rater would be perceived as a real villain; he has presented a favorable image during the rating period, but has now dealt a severe and unjustified blow to his subordinate. Cognitive dissonance resulting from the inconsistency of the formal negative feedback (bad OER) with informal positive feedback (favorable relationship) would be extremely high, but easily and naturally reduced by projecting the negative perception to the offending rater.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE: Very high level of frustration. Outward-directed aggression and anger directed at the rater.^c Anxiety is present, but tends to be overshadowed by anger, dislike, and distrust aimed at the rater.

MOTIVATIONAL RESPONSE: Acceptance of the rater shifts from high (due to favorable relationship) to very low. Low loyalty accompanies, and alienation of ratee from rater, is near total. Antagonism and aggression is specifically targeted at the rater. Levels of aspiration regarding future performance may be temporarily degraded by an overwhelming desire to get even with the rater, than work toward organizational objectives. Levels of expectation are lowered because of uncertainty; reward has not been equal to input effort . . . what will the future hold?

PROBABLE EFFECT ON FUTURE BEHAVIOR: Aggressive behavior with respect to rater. Apt to cope via the "fight" mode. Closed, defensive, and assertive behavior toward the rater is likely.^d Behavior patterns are less flexible^e than previously and a disproportionate amount of time is spent seeking to restore and protect the threatened self-concept and to vindicate the "wrong" of the unjustified, bad OER. Such behavior is apt to be organizationally dysfunctional.^f

FOOTNOTES: a. Steers and Porter, Motivation and Work Behavior, pp. 140-147.

b. Lawler, Motivation in Work Organizations, p. 69. "Under-reward leads to feelings of unfair treatment."

c. Steers and Porter, p. 143. ". . . there can be little doubt that inequity results in dissatisfaction, in an unpleasant emotional state . . . (of) anger or guilt."

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- d. Combs and Snygg, Individual Behavior, p. 117. "The adoption of a negative "You can't make me do it" attitude is a potent means of regaining feelings of competence and independence."
- e. Paul T. Young, Motivation and Emotion (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1961), p. 536. "Behavior that is instigated by frustration is stereotyped, rigid, unchanging in pattern."
- f. Lawler, Motivation in Work Organizations, p. 132. "The threat of dismissal (represented by the bad OER) can produce other self-protective and defensive behaviors that are not necessarily functional, for example, risk-avoidance."
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Figure 13

Behavioral Effects--Career-Damaging OER, Unjustified,
from Favorable Rater

deny this fact to the ratee's perception of himself, and the "unjustified" aspect exists only in his mind. In any case, his subsequent behaviors may seek vengeance for the perceived wrong he has been done. He may aggressively pursue behavioral patterns, including organizationally undesirable ones, designed to reinstitute his sense of adequacy. Dissonance due to the threat to self-concept may be attenuated by aggressive behavior toward the rater which becomes the source of a new, if misdirected, sense of adequacy. Anti-rater, and possible anti-Army, behavior has then replaced productive, organizationally supportive behavior.

Module 8 (Figure 14). Basically the same dynamics are at work here as in the previous discussion of Module 7, with the difference being an unfavorable, rather than a favorable, relationship with the rater. This eliminates the ratee's feeling that his rater was "two-faced," but nevertheless still sets in motion the emotions of anger, alienation, distrust, bitterness and defensiveness as in the previous case, Module 7. While the ratee will experience some dissonance, he probably will project any perceived inadequacy to the offending rater so that little damage is done to his self-concept. Such anti-rater attitudes and behavior may be less stringent than in the previous case, since the relationship has been unfavorable all along and there is thus no surprise turnabout of the rater to deal with. Still, the "fight" mode of coping behavior is probable and the ratee's sentiments as well as his time and energy will doubtless reflect a predisposition to enhance his tarnished self-image at the expense of his rater and at the expense of organizational effectiveness.

MODULE 8

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EVALUATION
ON US ARMY OFFICER BEHAVIOR

CUES: Individual perceives his OER as CAREER DAMAGING, his relationship with his rater as UNFAVORABLE, and his evaluation is actually UNJUSTIFIED.

PERCEPTION (as articulated to self): "I did a good job for that SOB, but he's destroyed me with this OER."

COGNITIVE RESPONSE: Perception of extreme inequity of reward for input effort (underreward).^{a,b} Self-concept threatened by negative feedback, but ameliorated by knowledge that it was unjustified. Unfavorableness of relationship with rater is accentuated. Level of need-satisfaction very low due to underreward.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE: Inconsistency of formal negative feedback (bad OER) contradicts personal knowledge that the bad OER was unjustified, and causes high levels of anxiety and frustration. Unfavorable relationship between ratee and rater is exacerbated and characterized by anger, hostility, and lack of support.^c Frustration over unfavorable relationship is compounded by new frustration over fears about career and future following the bad OER.

MOTIVATIONAL RESPONSE: Already low supportiveness of rater drops even lower, and may become open alienation and even open aggressiveness directed toward rater. Level of aspiration may be degraded by a desire to get even with the rater, temporarily displacing valid organizational goals. Level of expectation is lowered due to negative formal feedback and uncertainty regarding the equity of rewards for future efforts.

PROBABLE EFFECT ON FUTURE BEHAVIOR: Distrust and alienation between rater and ratee tend to dominate the ratee's behavioral pattern. He may spend excessive time seeking ways to restore his self-concept and get even with the rater. Such vindictive behavior is apt to be organizationally dysfunctional.^d Cautious, closed, game-playing behavior may supplant more open and authentic behavior. Loyalty toward rater is nonexistent. The adoption of a negative "you can't make me do it" attitude is a potent means of regaining feelings of competence and independence, and may prompt stiff resistance to the rater's leadership and authority.^e

FOOTNOTES: a. Steers and Porter, Motivation and Work Behavior, pp. 140-143.

b. Lawler, Motivation in Work Organizations, p. 69. "Under-reward leads to feelings of unfair treatment."

c. Steers and Porter, p. 143. ". . . there can be little doubt that inequity results in dissatisfaction, in an unpleasant emotional state . . . (of) anger or guilt."

d. Lawler, p. 132. "The threat of dismissal (represented by the bad OER) can produce other self-protective and defensive behaviors that are not necessarily functional, for example, risk-avoidance."

e. Combs and Snygg, Individual Behavior, p. 117.

Figure 14

Behavioral Effects--Career-Damaging OER, Unjustified,
from Unfavorable Rater

EVALUATION AS THREAT AND CORRESPONDING BEHAVIOR

It is generally conceded that the evaluative process is threatening. It causes great discomfiture on the part of the rater and ratee alike. When the ratee knows his career, indeed his security and that of his family, hangs in the balance of his OER, he perceives the existence of at least a potential threat. Less drastic perhaps, in terms of immediate impact, but nevertheless just as real, is the potential threat to one's self-concept if the evaluation process were to reveal a criticism or deficiency. As seen in the model, such a criticism would upset one's sense of adequacy, particularly in the case of individuals who already perceive themselves as less than adequate. (McGregor's view that "An individual's ability to accept criticism is inversely related to his need to hear it" has already been offered.) Proponents of the perceptual school of psychology have found that the better adjusted a person, the better able he is to accept unflattering truth about himself.³⁰ Not even the most secure personality, however, can accept the possibility of criticism without feeling some degree of threat and anxiety.

Given that we all perceive some degree of threat when we face being evaluated, what sort of behavior does this engender? According to Combs and Snygg³¹ people under threat are likely to behave rigidly and unquestioningly, with low tolerance for the ambiguities that life presents. "People under stress seem less able to cope with . . . unsolved problems," according to the same authors.³² When faced with threat, a disproportional amount of time may be spent in defending one's self-concept and making excuses for one's weaknesses.³³

Because of the pervasiveness, power, and omnipresence of the evaluative threat, it is probable that many Army officers feel vaguely uneasy much of the time. For "It is characteristic of people feeling anxious that they are unable to define precisely what it is that concerns and distresses them."³⁴ It seems, then, that the tensions, anxieties, and threats posed by the evaluative environment may contribute to dysfunctional behavior by some members of the officer corps.

THE EVALUATIVE STANDARD; DETERMINANT OF BEHAVIOR

It has already been suggested that an individual being rated shapes his behavior to influence his rater. While his rater prescribes many of the duties and standards for performance of a specific job, a ratee's behavior is also shaped by the criteria specified on the OER form itself. These criteria are not situationally specific as are the personal performance standards of the rater, but are of such overwhelming importance that the Department of the Army has prescribed them as overall criteria by which all officers are to be evaluated. While these serve as evaluation criteria for the rating chain, they are in fact performance criteria for the officer being rated. In effect, they tell the officer "these are the things the Army thinks are important." They tell him "you must do these things," thus they constitute the behavioral imperatives of the Army profession. Because the Army's reward-punishment system (of promotion/elimination, etc.) is directly tied to these normative performance criteria, their force in shaping officer behavior is immense. There are rewards for conformity to the norms; punishments for norm deviation. Over a period of time, an

officer internalizes these norms and they become an integral part of his system of values. Until the process of internalization of norms is complete, the officer is responding to external performance standards. This may result in anxiety, internal conflict, and game-playing behavior, as the officer is conforming to someone else's standards, not necessarily congruent with his own. After the Army's professional norms have been internalized though, they are an integral part of the officer's own values and provide the perceptual foundation for his professional behavior.

If the OER's criteria serve to set values and behavioral norms, then the extrinsic reward/punishment structure which flows from the evaluation system enforces them. The model at Figure 15 illustrates the critical cyclic effect. (See Figure 15, page 76.) Officer values are derived from a composite of individual (e.g., personal, extra-organizational) values, those institutional values articulated as performance criteria on the OER, and organizational values as articulated by the organization leader. From this value-set, an officer develops concepts of normative behavior. When confronted with a stimulus, the individual formulates an appropriate specific behavioral response, based on his concepts of normative behavior and upon the specific environmental factors he perceives at that instant. The ensuing behavior may or may not conform to organizational/institutional norms. If it conforms, and is not rewarded, the value of such behavior is negatively reinforced, and the positive, normative behavior less likely to be repeated. Alternatively, behavior which conforms to organizational/institutional norms may be equitably rewarded, thereby positively

reinforcing the value of such behavior and increasing the probability that it will be repeated. Note, however, that if the reward is perceived as inequitable, the behavior is negatively reinforced.

If the individual's behavior is non-normative, it may or may not be punished or sanctioned. If it is not punished, the value of such non-normative behavior is positively reinforced, thereby raising the likelihood of future aberrant behavior. If the norm-violating behavior is equitably punished, the individual perceives (though reluctantly and with some hostility) that the system is working, and that his original values were correct.

In this manner, the OER's performance criteria, in conjunction with the reward/punishment system, establish a role-model for officer corps behavior. If deviations from the normative behaviors of the role are not equitably rewarded or sanctioned, the OER's function in articulating that role-model is denigrated.

Within this conceptual framework lies a major key to creating a motivational climate conducive to gaining and sustaining maximum effort from members of the US Army officer corps. A synergistic, upward spiral of the equitable reward→motivation→performance cycle can produce quantum gains in officer corps effectiveness. To attain this desirable result, the Army must pay careful attention to the pervasive influence of the evaluation system on officer values and behavioral norms, and to the equitable use of the reward/punishment system as a means to enforce those norms.

Many issues involving officer corps performance and professionalism can be examined within the context of the motivational models

described in this chapter. The next chapter will deal with the impact of officer evaluation on the behavior of the officer corps in the aggregate.

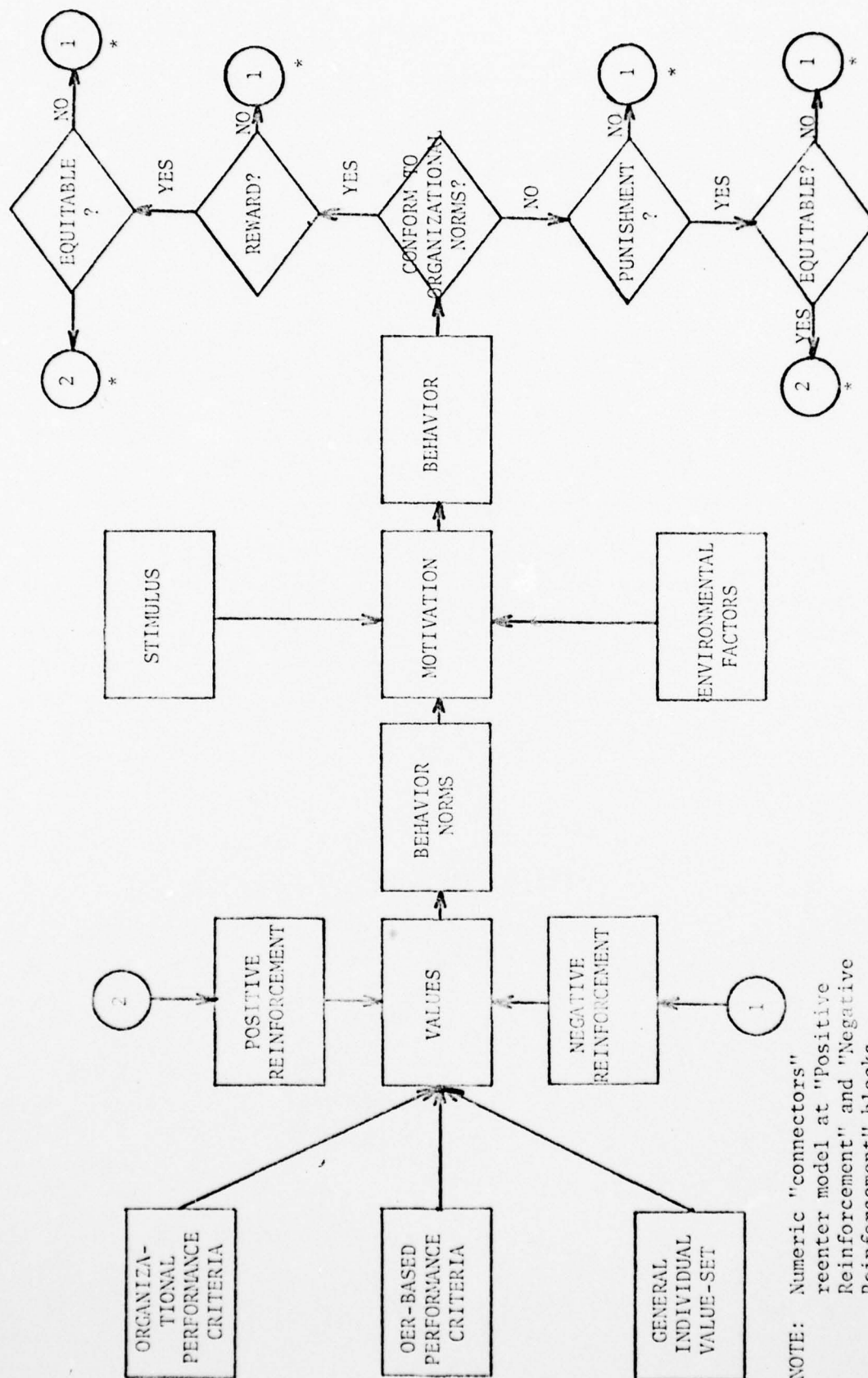


Figure 15

The Influence of Positive and Negative Reinforcement of OER-Based Performance Criteria on Officer Values, Norms, and Behavior

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER IV

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS--THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT OF OFFICER EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

To the extent that officer evaluation affects the behavior of individual officers, it affects the officer corps collectively. While it is difficult to generalize about such a broad organization as the US Army Officer Corps (for there are certainly exceptions), it is possible to at least tentatively project the sociological impact of officer evaluation along the simplistic lines of "effect on individuals" multiplied by "number of individuals" = "cumulative effect." In all probability this understates the case, as there is likely a synergistic, gestalt-like compounding effect, rather than a simple arithmetic compounding.

Methodology for this chapter, as for previous ones, is not intended to incorporate the rigor of hard research, but rather to suggest possible consequences of officer evaluation, support them with appropriate theory and evidence where possible, and let the reader infer the degree of "correctness" based on his own experiences and observations.

EVALUATION AND "TICKET-PUNCHING"

The phenomena of "ticket-punching," of Army officers dashing through a succession of assignments and schools merely to get them on

their record, has been clearly identified, acknowledged, and universally damned. Ticket-punching has been blamed for a number of evils and is purported to have caused decay in the fabric of the officer corps. For all the problems attributed to ticket-punching, however, studies dealing with the phenomenon and identifying its causes are conspicuously absent. To partially address this absence and to develop the premise that ticket-punching is one of the behavioral effects of officer evaluation, consider the following scenario.

For years the officer corps watched the officer evaluation system tolerate and accrue more and more inflation. Dismayed selection boards reported the same phenomena, as they were presented with mountains of files containing basically similar inflated OERs, with little data by which to differentiate the quality of one officer vis-a-vis another. In the absence of differential officer evaluation data, the subjective biases and values of board members began to dominate selection decisions. Without intending it, some boards exhibited "incestuous" selection criteria, selecting officers who fit their personal biases and value-set. In discussing this phenomena, Dr. Harold J. Leavitt says:

Subjective personal assessment may lead an organization to find new people like the old ones. "Good" people may become people that today's management likes. And the people today's management likes may well be people like today's management. Subjective, personalized assessment, with little reference to the question of assessment for what, may, indeed ultimately yield an in-group of "all-alike" people.¹

Still charged with selecting "X" officers from a group of essentially undistinguishable files, boards had to find some basis for selection. Many elements of data in the file, such as very old (uninflated) OERs,

photographs, and the grade and/or reputation of the rater took on unintended significance and on occasion became selection discriminators.² But most boards viscerally balked at using these criteria and seized upon one data element that they perceived to be a valid discriminator; the jobs held by officers. For in the value systems of board members there existed at least an intuitive hierarchy of jobs. Was not the G3 more prestigious than the Headquarters Commandant? The commander more important than the staff officer of equal grade? Service in the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam more "worthy" than being an adviser?

Thus, insidiously and over a period of time, the dominant values of older board members manifested themselves in board selections and the message was not lost on the officer corps. Go for the "good" jobs (as reflected by the board's selections). Do as many of these jobs as possible. Get to the "right" schools. Go for a graduate degree. Work for the "right" people. In sum, fill your file as full as possible with this type of nonqualitative information because the evaluation system is so imprecise that qualitatively everybody looks about the same. In the words of an Army War College study,³ "We have created a climate in which doing certain jobs takes precedence over developing expertise."

The inability of the evaluation system to provide valid qualitative differential among officers has apparently helped to create and foster the "ticket-punch" syndrome. Differentiation based on ratings using the OER's performance criteria became impossible due to across-the-board inflation and "ticket-punching" was rewarded, yielding a perception that one must "punch tickets" to get ahead. This, in turn,

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gave rise to a value orientation which establishes a hierarchy of "tickets" and behavior directed at "punching" them.

EVALUATION AND OFFICER CORPS VALUES

In the preceding chapter it was suggested that the evaluation system influences an individual's values. Before assessing the extension of that phenomena to overall officer corps values, a definition is in order. According to England,⁴

A personal value system is viewed as a relatively permanent perceptual framework which shapes and influences the general nature of an individual's behavior. Values are similar to attitudes but are more ingrained, permanent, and stable in nature. Likewise a value is seen as being more general and less tied to any specific object than is the case with many attitudes. "Value" as used here is closer to ideology or philosophy than it is to attitude.

Given this definition, and given the previously discussed manner in which the OERs enforced (through reward-punishment) performance criteria mold an individual's perceptions, values, and behavior, can we extrapolate that phenomena to say that the officer evaluation system molds the values of the officer corps collectively? Consider this rather unequivocal statement from a 1974 US Army War College study.

. . . the most important function of the officer evaluation system (OES) is perhaps its least well recognized. Viewing the Army as a whole over the long term, we see the OES as the custodian, the mediator, the prime determinant of the value system of the officer corps.⁵

If the OES then molds officer corps values to this extent, what value structure has it created? In a key study by Tyler at the University of Minnesota in 1969,⁶ operative US Army officer corps values were found to be far more pragmatic, even selfish, than the idealized ethical/moral values

implied by "Duty-Honor-Country."⁷ He found, for example, that the values of:

High productivity,
Organizational efficiency,
My boss,
Ambition,
Ability,
Achievement, and
Success

were more dominant than the Army's officially espoused, intended values of:

Trust,
Loyalty,
Honor,
Dignity,
My subordinates, and
Equality.⁸

In assessing the perceived differences between "ideal" and "actual" Army standards, it is ironic that the Army War College found in 1970⁹ the most serious divergence (between ideal and actual) to be in the functional area of "completing officer efficiency reports." The very system which shapes officer corps values is itself the most flagrant deviate from the Army's desired values!

In terms of the "criteria + rewards yields perception, values, and behavior" formula, inflation has neutralized the OER's criteria, and rewards bestowed on those whose behavior stems from pragmatic, achievement, success-oriented values. In the event of conflict between the idealized values of integrity, moral courage, etc., and pleasing the boss, the officer corps has seen too many times that most often the "payoff" is in pleasing the boss, and the boss's power stems largely from his evaluative role.

Discussion has so far been disparaging of the means by which the evaluation system shapes values. But by no means is the inculcation of values via the evaluation system a totally negative thing. Beyond pre-commissioning orientations and an occasional service school course, where but from the OER does the officer learn what the Army expects of him? The OER serves as the primary vehicle for articulating, reminding, teaching and perpetuating institutional values and norms. The problem lies in failure to punish or sanction norm violators.

NORMS, CONFORMITY, AND EVALUATION

Evaluation forces compliance with norms in a variety of ways. We have seen how the universally applicable performance criteria printed on the OER form serve as standards against which all officers are judged. Because these criteria are the same for all officers, they establish a normative model for officer behavior. Each command, each job, and each situation demands certain other normative behavioral responses, with the norms themselves being established by a variety of influences, the most powerful of these being the standards of the rater. These expressed or implied standards of the rater are enforced by his evaluative power.

In any case, the behavioral options open to the ratee are carefully and rather rigidly circumscribed by a series of external norms imposed via the evaluation system. In order to survive and progress in an Army career, scrupulous conformity to those norms is required. Because norms are enforced by an officer's immediate supervisor (rater), the degree of conformity behavior is apt to be

high, since face-to-face interactions produce greater conformity than "long distance" interactions.¹⁰

In a large, highly structured, hierarchical organization like the Army, there are obviously advantages to high-conformity behavior. There are, however, some drawbacks. Most notably, habitual conformity retards personal growth and development, and stifles creativity. When conformity is rewarded, the logical converse is that innovation risks punishment (or at least lack of reward). Too, when an individual feels excessively constrained by externally imposed norms he may feel frustrated, "held back" and generally dissatisfied with his ability to contribute meaningfully to his job. Since more intelligent individuals are apt to conform less than those with lower intelligence,¹¹ a highly educated officer corps may experience significant dissatisfaction due to the conformity enforced through the evaluation system.

A further effect of this compliant, conforming behavioral pattern is that some people simply don't know where to stop. Under the implicit threat of the rater's evaluative power, some individuals may comply with their raters' every whim. In order not to risk violating an important norm, they are excessively conformant. Rather than simple obedience to orders, they adopt ingratiating, servile behavioral patterns toward their raters. Servility, needless to say, is anathema to a profession such as the Army which requires bold, aggressive, decisionmaking leaders to execute its ultimate combat role.

THE EFFECT OF EVALUATION ON ATTAINMENT OF ARMY GOALS

The "Golden Rule" for Army leaders, enshrined in the pages of history, is the primacy of mission accomplishment. Nothing, it is

taught, retards the leader's accomplishment of his mission. Yet it is ironic that the very system by which these leaders are selected is itself an inhibitor of mission accomplishment.

Given the already-established all-powerful role of the officer evaluation system, and the rater's place within that system, ratees know that they must clearly demonstrate mission accomplishment or face the career-crippling blow of a bad OER. In the peacetime Army, however, what mission is to be accomplished? What explicit goals and objectives are to be sought? Most Army officers' jobs have few discrete, quantifiable standards against which their performance can be validly measured. The absence of such clearly definable goals is compounded by the Army's poor track record in job counseling. Rare indeed is the situation in which rater and ratee develop and agree on specific identifiable goals and measures of effectiveness. This situation may cause aberrations in the behavior of raters and ratees alike. In the typical environment of ambiguity and ill-defined objectives the rater casts about for hard data on which to base evaluative judgments. Should the ratee be a commander, his rater may well latch on to predominant inspections and reports as such a vehicle. "How did he do on his last Annual General Inspection?" "What did he do on his ARTEP (Army Training and Evaluation Program)?" "How did he do on his NSIs (Nuclear Surety Inspections)?" "How were his 2715s (Unit Readiness Report)?" While virtually all Army inspections are caveated as "assistance oriented" rather than punitive, many a commander has been relieved for a poor showing on such inspections. To the extent that such measures are valid indicators of the commander's performance,

this practice may not be as bad as it seems. One could, in fact, make a strong case that the uninvolved third-party judgments of outside evaluators lends a dimension of objectivity not possible in the emotion-laden rater-ratee dyad. But one certain, but unintended, result is that the phenomenon of goal-displacement¹² occurs. Idealized goals of combat readiness and mission effectiveness are supplanted by operational goals of passing inspections, keeping the boss happy, and making one's statistical track record look right. Faced with genuine difficulty in measuring true effectiveness, raters may unwittingly emphasize those areas which do have statistical indicators, and ascribe to them unintended significance. This in turn creates a perception by rated officers that these are the areas that count, driving much of the officer corps to concentrate on superficial, though quantifiable, functions.

EVALUATION AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

One of the most pervasive theories of man's relationship with his organization is that of the psychological contract. This concept implies that the individual has a variety of expectations of the organization and that the organization has a variety of expectations of him.¹³ Such expectations are not written, and indeed, may be only vaguely perceived. Notwithstanding the imprecision of these expectations, they operate powerfully as determinants of behavior.

A review of Chapter III reveals that the Army's officer evaluation system provides the mechanism by which Army officers gauge the degree of equity afforded for their investment in the organization.

It is the ledger by which officers take stock of their input-output balance. And it is a principal determinant of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Schein's¹⁴ notion of the psychological contract is a closely related concept. If inputs and outputs are in balance, the expectations of both the individual and the organization have been met and the psychological contract fulfilled. If, on the other hand, an individual receives less output (reward) from the organization than he expects, he will perceive that his psychological contract has been violated. Because much of an individual's motivation to perform is predicated on his expectations that the organization will reciprocate with a reward equal to his investment, when the reliability of the reward structure becomes questionable, the constancy of motivation may falter. If the officer evaluation system serves as the hub of the reward structure, and if that system is not perceived as reliable and equitable, it follows that the evaluation system may detract from the motivation of the officer corps at large. Because officers perceive their OERs as the organization's response to their labors, the OER may well be seen as the organization's half of the psychological contract. If it is not up to expectations, the organization has breached its portion of the contract. If officers do not trust the evaluation system, there may well be broad implications for the performance of the officer corps. Can the organization realistically expect the total motivation and dedication of its members if those members question the reliability of the organization in fulfilling its half of the psychological contract?

EVALUATION, THE CAN-DO ATTITUDE AND PERFECTION

A positive attitude is a highly prized attribute of an Army officer. Lieutenant Colonel (now Brigadier General) Robert M. Joyce makes the point in a Defense Management Journal article "On Positive Thinking in the Army"¹⁵ that the OER strongly reinforces this traditional military virtue. He raises some interesting rhetorical questions. For example,

How much tolerance will a superior officer brought up on the values of unquestioning cooperation and unstinting loyalty show a subordinate who displays moral courage and integrity in a matter where their beliefs are opposed?

And

At what point must a subordinate abandon his strongly-felt negative views toward a plan or task, thereby surrendering his moral courage and integrity, in the interest of "joining the team" and "accentuating the positive"?

Certainly there are occasions when the Army officer must personify a "can-do" positive attitude. Military history is replete with examples of leaders inspiring their men to do "the impossible" by sheer positive spiritual motivation, and equally replete with examples of abject failure resulting from negative attitudes. But there are other instances, not well documented, where a leader's "can-do" attitude caused him to bite off more than he could chew, to see the world through rose-colored glasses, and to play down potential problems. Unbridled optimism and "can-do" spirit to impress one's superiors that "all is well" can lead to disastrous consequences. The following passage, drawn from Lieutenant Colonel Joyce's article, highlights the dangers implicit in the "can do" attitude.

. . . what is the effect of the positive-thinking ethic in the upper reaches of the military structure? upon military-civilian roles and missions within our government? upon the security of the nation?

Some feel that positive thinking in high places bears a heavy share of the blame for our dilemma in Southeast Asia. No responsible senior military officer has revealed, on the Vietnam war issue, the kind of 'negative attitude' manifested by General Ridgway in 1954 on the question of intervention in Indochina. Available evidence indicates that our senior military leaders were largely preoccupied with finding the means for prosecuting the war, not with stopping or limiting it. There appears to have been, officially at least, a general belief that they could "do the job," given sufficient means. Highly placed military officers did not openly take a strong stand against full-scale involvement in Vietnam, and even the out-of-power dissidents, Generals Gavin and Shoup, spoke largely from hindsight. To the decisions of President Kennedy and Johnson to throw the weight of American arms into the scales against North Vietnam and her sponsors the military responded with a solid "can do"!

The repeatedly optimistic reports of senior American military commanders throughout the period of the U.S. troop buildup in 1965-67 show how the "can do" ethic can serve to reject evidence that casts doubt on the official wisdom. The Administration needed convincing backing for its affirmation to the American people that the great venture was succeeding, that the sacrifices in blood and treasure would be redeemed by the eventual triumph. The military supplied this backing. Did no responsible senior military official foresee during 1965 and 1966 or 1967 that in 1969, with seven divisions still in the field, we would finally begin to wind down the fruitless contest? If so, we have no record of it. One must conclude that our senior military leaders were imbued by an unbending determination to prevail over all odds, to make the approved solution come right, and to vindicate the official rationale for our military presence in Vietnam. Call it "can do," or "positive thinking," or simply loyalty, selflessness, tenacity, understanding, and all the other values we prize in our officers--our national interests seem to have been badly served by it.

The military owes it to itself to seek the means whereby it may best serve the national interest. At the highest levels, it cannot afford, nor can the nation afford, the consequences of untempered positive thinking applied to decisions and actions affecting the national interest.¹⁶

"Light at the end of the tunnel?" "Boys home by Christmas?" Has the evaluation system placed such pressure on Army officers that they dare not raise a dischordant note amidst a chorus of "Can do's"? Has it created a climate where only "good news" is reported upward for fear that anything else carries inferences that the reporting subordinate "can't do"? Does the omnipresent OER force unrealistic demands for perfection? The Army War College¹⁷ says that the "zero defects" mentality

. . . is especially unappealing to those who take things seriously, who want to accomplish their mission, and who are prone to report the truth. It is antithetical to the Army's proclamation that it is people-oriented. Pressures to achieve unrealistic goals, whether imposed by design or generated through incompetence, soon strain the ethical fiber of the organization.

The weight of evidence suggests that the unrelenting pressure created by the Army's officer evaluation system promotes "can do-ism" and "zero defects" thinking to an unhealthy degree, and stifles the upward reporting of information which may be construed as an unfavorable reflection on the organization or its leaders. The posturing of perfection needed to succeed in an Army career and unbridled "can-do-ism" are unfortunate behavioral effects of the intense evaluative environment.

THE EVALUATION SYSTEM AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

Foregoing sections of this chapter have depicted the author's views on several undesirable features of the Army's organizational climate, at least as it exists within the officer corps. Because these views may legitimately be attacked as one man's bias, it may be

useful to examine the current "health" of the climate as viewed by others. In a broadly based survey¹⁸ in August, 1976, Army field grade officers (majors and above) were asked to evaluate the motives of other field grade officers. While 35.9% of respondents agreed that fellow field grade officers seek to balance considerations of mission and men, the largest group of respondents (47%) said that their fellow officers put career ahead of mission, or men, or any combination thereof. Such attitudes hardly reflect traditional values of "Duty, Honor, Country," suggesting, rather, a predisposition toward behavior designed to assure a good OER.

Such is the climate of today's Army officer corps, as reported by that officer corps. Is this climate, at least in part, the product of the officer evaluation process? Preceding sections and chapters suggest that it is. And in an anecdotal input to an Army War College study,¹⁹ one major expressed it this way, "Duty, Honor, Country" is becoming 'me, my rater, my indorser, make do, to hell with it.'" If that is indicative of the climate, and if people behave to fit their climate,²⁰ such a climate and such behaviors are clearly antithetical to US national security interests. Moreover, such self-serving behaviors risk the serious erosion of popular support for the military. Critical civil-military relations rest on a bedrock of public trust which the Army has earned through dedication to serving the nation. A public perception that Army officers serve their self-interests first--then national interests--would destroy the "special trust and confidence" with which the nation vests its officers.

This paper would be incomplete and misleading if the impression was left that the only thing Army officers think about and strive for

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER IV

1. Harold J. Leavitt, Managerial Psychology, p. 119.
2. Based on a series of selection board after-action reports reviewed during the period 1972-1974.
3. US Army War College, Study on Military Professionalism (Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1970), p. 26.
4. George England, quoted in Ibid., p. A-1.
5. US Army War College, Executive Appraisal, p. 3.
6. James W. Tyler, A Study of the Personal Value Systems of U.S. Army Officers and a Comparison with American Managers (unpublished master's thesis, University of Minnesota, 1969).
7. US Army War College, Study on Military Professionalism, p. 13.
8. Tyler, op. cit.
9. US Army War College, Professionalism Study, p. B-21.
10. Jonathan L. Freedman, J. Merrill Carlsmith, and David D. Sears, Social Psychology (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 222.
11. Ibid., p. 240.
12. Fremont E. Kast and James E. Rosenzweig, Organization and Management: A Systems Approach (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), p. 165.
13. Edger H. Schein, Organizational Psychology (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 12.
14. Ibid.
15. LTC (now COL) Robert M. Joyce, "On Positive Thinking in the Army," Perspectives in Defense Management (Industrial College of the Armed Forces), Spring 1972, pp. 69-74.
16. Ibid., p. 71.
17. US Army War College, Study on Military Professionalism, p. 24.
18. US Army Military Personnel Center, Quarterly Sample Survey, August 1976. Army Sample Surveys draw from population samples sufficient to yield confidence levels at 95% ($\pm 5\%$).

is a good evaluation from their bosses. Most officers spend most of their time and effort in the pursuit of duty. They are dedicated, diligent, and hard-working. But they work in an organizational climate dominated by the ever-present spectre of evaluation, and they know that one slip can deprive them of a career in the service of their nation. And so they strike a sort of "devil's bargain," acceding to the evaluative pressures of the organizational climate and modifying their behavior in order to serve. If there are to be indictments then, let them be of the system and not of the Army's officers.

The officer evaluation system, which generates the processes and behaviors described in this paper, can be changed. To capitalize on the full talents of its officer corps, the Army would be well advised to reexamine its assumptions about officer evaluation, motivation, and behavior, and to unleash the tremendous power of the evaluative process to enhance officer effectiveness, performance, and professionalism.

This paper is offered in the hope that it will serve as the first step in that direction.

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18. US Army Military Personnel Center, Quarterly Sample Survey, August 1976. Army Sample Surveys draw from population samples sufficient to yield confidence levels at 95% ($\pm 5\%$).

19. US Army War College, Study of Military Professionalism, Annex B, Appendix 1, p. 2.
20. Benjamin Schneider, "Organizational Climates: An Essay," in Personnel Psychology, (1975), 28:447-479.

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